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School-based Interagency Collaboration: A Case Study

by

Neil John McPherson ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

in

Educational Administration

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1995

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ISBN 0-612-06408-5

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **School-Based Interagency Collaboration: A Case Study** submitted by Neil John McPherson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration.

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Paterson

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Date: September 25, 1995

Dedicated to those who

like kids.

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine and describe the perceptions of students, parents, school and agency staff members, with respect to nature of interagency collaboration (IAC) in a school setting, and its impact on schooling. Five major themes related to IAC were identified: (a) the impetus, or conditions that exist in a school and community which create the need for establishing an IAC project, (b) the nature of the IAC project; its philosophy, service delivery approaches, organizational features, and unique or different features, (c) the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the IAC, (d) the benefits to students, parents, school and agency staff, and (e) the challenges or disadvantages.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with key informants in two schools. School district evaluation information pertaining to student achievement, attitudes, attendance, enrollment, and staff attitudes for one of the schools was obtained and compared to perceptions.

Data collected in this study agree with the literature which suggests that conditions creating a need for IAC can be attributed broadly to deteriorating social conditions, diminishing resources, and the indaquacies of existing service delivery systems.

The immediacy of coordinated services provided by knowledgeable and skilled agency staff was seen as a critical factor in the success of the IAC project. The acceptance and practice of boundary spanning, and the meaningful involvement of other partners were also seen as key factors in conducting the work of the IAC.

Benefits to all partners were reported, with respondents describing perceptions of improved student outcomes in attitudes and achievement in particular. Evaluation information compiled annually by the school district showed unexpected gains in areas

such as student achievement, attitudes and attendance from the first year of the project to the end of the second year. Respondents indicated that the IAC project helped to reduce problems through preventive and case management services. This helped to create a more relaxed, safer learning environment where students and teachers could focus on learning. Parents, school and agency staff members also reported benefits in accessing and providing services, and in improved attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

A number of challenges were identified related to issues such as, the definition used for the IAC project, ownership and control, time demands, resources, mandates, involvement of partners, confidentiality, and restrictions created by the school or school district policies and procedures. These were not seen to be major problems by site-based partners, but did need to be addressed in order to reduce frustration.

The identification of key factors and processes, the challenges, and the potential benefits for students may be useful to schools in implementing or improving existing programs of IAC, and for planning by various levels of authority including local school boards, municipal and provincial governments.

Acknowledgements

Many individuals have provided assistance and support with this study.

I greatly appreciated the guidance and counsel provided by Dr. Ken Ward who served as my advisor, and the thoughtful suggestions offered by other members of my advisory committee, Dr. Margaret Haughey and Dr. John Paterson. I also wish to recognize other faculty members who influenced my thinking and work through courses and other interactions.

I very much appreciated the camaraderie, support, and ideas provided by fellow students during my program.

My sincere appreciation is extended to the students, parents, school and agency staff members who participated in interviews. They gave willingly of their time, and they provided true insight and forthright opinions.

I am indebted to Karen Bardy, Alex Hillyard, Rick Morrow, and Joan Rittman, who provided advice and feedback during the initial brainstorming phase.

My thanks to Leslie Taylor for her usual speedy and accurate word processing.

I also appreciated the support and generosity of Edmonton Public Schools for providing my leave for professional improvement, particularly during a period of financial restraint.

My biggest thanks goes to Peg, Craig, and Logan for the ongoing support, for the freedom to devote time and energy to this study, for withstanding my incessant thesis talk, and for helping me to keep perspective.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

A growing number of students with special needs and circumstances are being served by health care, social services, and other agencies external to the school. The needs and circumstances of students, and the coordination of various human services required by many students in order to participate successfully in school present challenges and opportunities to school personnel. A number of projects have been established in recent years to meet the diverse needs of students and their families through school-based interagency collaboration (IAC). The focus of this study has been to describe the reasons for embarking on IAC, its unique features and processes, and the impact it may have on schooling. This was accomplished through an analysis of the perceptions of students, parents, school and agency staff members involved in two schools, along with evaluation information compiled annually by the school district.

The Problem

It is generally accepted that coordinated human services are required by many students in order to meet their needs. The increasing attention directed toward IAC as one solution has generated an interest in asking the question, What are the benefits and challenges of IAC, and what are the unique features and key factors that contribute to its effectiveness? This question serves as the overall problem statement for this study.

Recognizing the necessity for IAC is the first step. A host of challenging issues confront those who would embark on, or strive to improve, the provision of integrated services. Among these issues are: the reasons for establishing an IAC project in a school--the conditions that provide the impetus, the unique features of the project and factors that contribute to its effectiveness, the benefits to various partners, and the challenges. Considering these issues has led to the following sub-problems for this study.

Sub-problems

1. What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the conditions in the school and community that create the impetus for establishing IAC in the school?

2. What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the unique features of the IAC project in their school; that is, what does it look like, and how is it different from the previous situation? This question led to an examination of the perceptions of the philosophy and purpose, the service delivery approaches, and organizational matters such as, efficacy of the school-based model, decision making, mandate issues, and resource allocation and deployment. I suspected that the manner in which these were played out would have a major role in the effectiveness of the IAC.

3. What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the critical factors that contribute to the effectiveness of IAC in their school; that is, what makes it work well? My bias here was that the attitudes, abilities, and experiences of parents, school and agency staff, expectations for teamwork, and the situation or handicapping condition of students would play an important role in the effectiveness of the IAC.

4. What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the benefits of IAC, particularly in terms of student outcomes? I expected that the perceptions of individuals from these groups would show that IAC can have a positive influence on achievement, attitudes, attendance, and behaviour among students. Sub-categories of achievement and attitudes include performance in areas such as citizenship, organizational and study skills, participation in class and school activities, relations with others, responsibility level, and strategies for learning and behaviour.

5. What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the challenges or disadvantages? Issues that I viewed as potential challenges or disadvantages included, dominance by the school, the commitment and ability of school and agency staff to work together, and effective participation of students and parents in agency intervention and other activities of the IAC project.

Assumptions

1. The effectiveness of IAC is influenced by a number of factors, the impact of which will likely vary under different circumstances.

2. The nature, benefits, and challenges of school-based IAC can be examined through an analysis of perceptions of individuals involved in the work of the IAC.

3. Evaluation reports describing annual school results will be available for use in this study and can be compared to perceptions.

4. Key informants will understand the interview questions as intended, and will provide truthful responses that represent an accurate description of the reality in their school.

5. Data collection and analysis will accurately reflect the perceptions of respondents.

Limitations

1. The use and analysis of interview data may by viewed as biased.

2. The use of two schools which have been operating an IAC project for two years, and selected key informants may create selection bias.

Delimitations

As indicated by the sub-problems, the intention was to examine and describe several aspects concerning IAC as viewed by students, parents, and site-based staff involved in the process. This delimited the study by omitting potentially important information from school district and agency administrators and from government officials. Perceptions of these personnel would have added to areas dealing with organizational matters.

Definitions

School Success

Many students who are receiving services from other agencies in order to function at school have traditionally experienced considerable difficulty at school; thus, a definition of school success may vary greatly for different students. For those with a history of difficulty at home, at school, or with the law, for example, simply being maintained in the regular school system, as opposed to dropping out or being expelled, may be an indicator of success. For most however, meeting expectations for learning and behavior; attending school regularly; and feeling positive about learning, the school, and others are considered key elements in a definition of school success.

External Agencies

For purposes of this study, external agencies refer to government sponsored services, other than education, provided under authority of the departments of health, justice, and social services. Personnel such as nurses, physicians (including psychiatrists), occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, police officers, lawyers, and social workers, are representative of agency staff.

Students Receiving Intervention or Extra Services

This refers to students who are being served by staff from external agencies under authority of provincial departments listed in the previous item.

Interagency Coordination

Interagency coordination has been described in the literature, and reported by Alberta Education (1993), as: "a process of concerted decision making or action in which two or more organizations participate with some sort of deliberate adjustment to one another to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Initial phases of the coordination continuum are characterized by activities such as sharing information and cooperating in assessing needs and program planning among front line staff.

Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration goes beyond mere cooperation to include "extensive joint planning and pooling of resources". (Alberta Education, 1993, p. 15). This phase of coordination involves middle and senior management in the provision of integrated services, where staff are organized into programs rather than according to separate disciplines.

School-based IAC Model

Some models of interagency collaboration feature a school-based approach, where the other agency staff maintain offices in the school and conduct their activities primarily at the school. Others are community-based in which the interaction between school and other agency staff may or may not occur in the school, and external agency intervention occurs in a community setting such as a hospital, health clinic, social services office, or the home. This study focuses on IAC projects using a school-based model.

Significance of the Proposed Research

For many years there has been a perception among school personnel, and perhaps among others, that schools are expected to "be all things to all people." Schools are increasingly faced with accommodating students with special cognitive, physical, mental health, and social needs who require the services of other agencies. Many students with physical disabilities, communication disorders, and psychiatric disorders, along with those "at-risk" due to conditions such as poverty and abuse, are under the care of service providers from the fields of health care, social services, and the justice system. These students generally experience difficulty with schooling.

The situation has moved beyond perceptions to reality with the recent Alberta Education (1993, c) policy: "Educating students with exceptional needs in regular classrooms in neighborhood or local schools shall be the first placement option considered by school boards, in consultation with students, parents/guardians and school staff". (p. 2). This action along with revised policies and regulations by school districts such as Edmonton Public Schools (1994) provides direction for schools to accommodate within regular classes, students with special needs: "The regular classroom shall be the first placement option considered" (p. 1).

In many cases, schools find it necessary to provide services, or to assist students and families in accessing services from other agencies. In order for these students to benefit from schooling, their needs in other areas must be addressed, a requirement which can create complications for the school staff and place a strain on the school's resources. In one of its resource guides designed to promote IAC, Alberta Education (1991, b) addresses the challenges presented by young children with severe problems in an era of diminishing resources:

> The problems young people face also affect their ability to be successful at school. While there is no question that the needs of many young people go far beyond the traditional mandate of the school, some students make extensive demands and their needs often require disproportionate amounts of teacher and administrator time. The community is also placing increased demands on schools to deal with a variety of problems. (p. 3)

There is also a need to recognize that the broader goals of education are a shared responsibility, and that schools must work closely with other agencies in addressing the needs of the whole child in the context of the family and community. The renewed interest in IAC--when two or more agencies come together to deliver coordinated, integrated services--provides some hope in meeting these challenges. Today's social and economic conditions make the school an obvious setting for organizing and implementing these services. Many children spend more time with school staff than with parents, and the success of school programming for most special needs students depends on addressing health, social, and other issues, for which school staff are not trained, but with which they are often involved, by necessity and at times by default.

In terms of educational practice, the identification of critical factors and the potential impact of IAC on student outcomes should be useful to schools in implementing or improving existing programs of IAC, and for planning by various levels of authority such as local school boards, municipal, and provincial governments.

The practical and theoretical emphases in this area have focused more on processes, such as improved access to services and organizational efficiency, than on outcomes related to student achievement and parenting skills, for example. Data collected in this study might unveil a link between IAC and student success with schooling. The study may also provide information concerning interagency relations and aspects of school operations that are impacted by IAC, or those aspects that need to be considered in implementing an effective IAC project. This may be useful to school and agency administrators in planning collaborative service delivery systems. Theoretical significance may emerge through an increased understanding of the key factors and processes of IAC, and how people will think differently about this phenomenon as a result of the study.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The IAC movement is receiving increasingly greater attention at the local school, school board, municipal, provincial, and federal levels. This renewed interest is based on a number of societal conditions--the impetus for embarking on IAC--which provide a context for examining the specific problems addressed in this study. The activity that has been generated from this interest, and the costs in terms of planning and resource allocation stimulates a number of questions: What is the impetus for establishing IAC projects? What does a successful IAC project look like? What are the key factors that contribute to its success? What are the benefits and challenges? Although the growing interest might suggest that there are benefits for students, few studies have focused specifically on outcomes for students. These questions provided the context for reviewing the literature under three broad categories: (a) the impetus for IAC, (b) the nature of IAC, the factors that contribute to its effectiveness, and the challenges, and (c) the benefits. A wealth of information on the first two topics is evident in the literature, but few studies focus on the benefits with an emphasis on student outcomes.

The Impetus

With respect to the need for establishing IAC, there is strong support for providing integrated services in order to serve children in the context of the family and community. Recent developments in Alberta are likely to stimulate more activity in this area. Alberta Education's province-wide review of special education in 1990 culminated in the document, Special Education Review: Action Plan (1991) which described problems and recommendations under three categories: (a) funding, (b) coordination of services, and (c) outcome measures. Its more recent document, The Art of Working Together (1993) describes issues facing individuals, and the changes needed in human services to help individuals address their issues. The diversity of social, cultural, economical, and environmental conditions of individuals precludes the possibility of effective human services being delivered by single disciplines or organizations on an independent basis. Societal conditions "related to the economy, the structure of families, and demographics have altered the needs for education, health, and social services" (p. 2). In addition to addressing fragmented services, collaboration is also seen as necessary to reduce duplication and costs. Changing societal conditions along with the growing number of individuals with diverse needs lead to a " number of conditions which, when they occur together, indicate that collaboration is called for" (p. 15). These conditions include the following:

> when two or more organizations serve the same target population, relate to the same type of need or provide similar services . . . when organizations have complementary resources . . . when organizations and agencies have compatible philosophies . . . . when a problem cannot be solved or a need cannot be met by a single group or organization . . . . when everyone will gain more than they will lose (pp. 15,16)

More recent government initiatives are conveyed through Alberta Education's Three-Year Business Plan (1994) which has identified the goal "to improve the coordinated delivery of services for special needs children" (p. 15), and through the government's Commissioner of Services for Children report, *Focus on Children* (1994) which describes the mandate "to design a new integrated, more effective and community-based system of support to children and families" (p. 3). Integrated service is one of four themes of the action plan which "proposes that services throughout the province become part of a local integrated service plan in order to receive full funding" (p. 9).

The companion report to *Focus on Children--Finding a Better Way*--by the Commissioner of Services for Children (November, 1994) refers to a need for drastic adjustments in thinking, and in methods of service delivery. This report suggests that the government may have been inadvertently contributing to the difficulties families experience in solving their problems by providing continued unchecked growth in government services, thereby creating a "growing dependence on government to provide rescue and remedies for a growing list of social ills" (p. 5). The report combines public input and a review of experiences in other locations in Canada and the United States, and concludes that "a new approach must be child focused, family centred, and community based . . . . organizations must learn to work within one plan and focus on a single set of goals" (p. 9). The report also suggests that layers of bureaucracy and provincial and federal government legislation get in the way of service delivery. What is required is a "broad systemic change . . .[involving] a decentralization of control over resources from central governments to local communities" (p. 32). Major restructuring of children's services is being proposed which, will likely have considerable impact on IAC for Alberta schools.

In the United States, Melaville and Blank (1992), who co-authored one of the publications of the Education and Human Services Consortium, provide a national perspective on the need for IAC in that country. This consortium is a coalition of twenty-two national organizations established to facilitate "interagency efforts to connect children and families with comprehensive services" (p. 2). These authors also distinguish "between limited cooperative efforts and more intensive collaborative arrangements," and argue that "real progress toward large scale comprehensive service delivery is possible only when communities move beyond cooperation to genuinely collaborative ventures at both the service delivery and system level" (p. 2). In describing the ills of the present system in the United States Melaville and Blank (1992) reinforce the need to move to a new system of integrated services. Their description of these shortcomings, which likely apply to other jurisdictions, including Alberta, is paraphrased as follows:

> (a) present services are crisis-oriented, (b) the current social welfare system divides the problems of children and families into rigid and distinct categories that fail to reflect their interrelated causes and solutions, (c) a lack of functional communication among the myriad public and private sector agencies, (d) the inability of specialized agencies to easily craft comprehensive solutions to complex problems, and (e) existing services are insufficiently funded. (pp. 6-8)

Dryfoos (1994) refers to community agencies bringing services into the school in order to create "a new kind of 'seamless' institution, a community-oriented school with a joint governance structure that allows maximum responsiveness to the community . . . . The theme of integration of educational, health, and social welfare services reverberates through local, state, and national dialogues" (p. 12). She speaks of the need to establish "full-service schools" as one-stop, collaborative institutions in which "one or more services is supplied in a school by an entity other than the school district. . . . [and] funding for a program within a school is not derived primarily from the school district budget" (p. 46). Dryfoos (1994) suggests that "it is possible to find an example of almost every category of human services located in the school" (p. 47); a reflection of the growing number of families with difficulties that spill over into the school. She refers to the increasing number of single young mothers living below the poverty line; troubled young families whose children need intervention by specialists in health care, justice, and social services -- services which need to be planned and delivered in concert with parents and school staff.

Dryfoos (1994) illustrates her argument for IAC in referring to "the 'new morbidities'--unprotected sex, drugs, violence, and depression--that threaten the future of today's children" in contrast to concerns such as chronic disease, nutrition, acne, and head lice, which were representative of problems facing young people during earlier times (p. 2). She estimates that one in four American youngsters ages ten to seventeen "use drugs, have early unprotected intercourse, are truant, and fall far behind in school--and as a result, these seven million young people will never be able to 'make it' without massive changes in their current circumstances" (p. 3). Dryfoos worries that educational reforms such as site-based management and changes in teaching practices are not integrated with the movement to provide comprehensive health and social services. She feels however, that health care reform in the United States may provide some hope in establishing "school-based clinics as delivery sites for primary health" and estimates that creating centers in 16,000 of the country's 82,000 schools is a reasonable goal (p. 16). In spite of this urgent demand, she does suggest that the marriage "between educational systems and health and social systems to create new kinds of governance" will be a considerable challenge (p. 17).

Swan and Morgan (1993) point out that the passage of PL 99-457 by congress in 1986, and "its reauthorization in 1992 (PL 102-119) explicitly calls for the development of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency program of early intervention services" (p. x). This law is significant in that it recognizes the importance of preventative measures and early intervention. There is however, no less urgency for addressing the many and varied problems facing older children and adolescents, as reported by Melaville and Blank (1992):

> School failure increasingly functions as a proxy measure for a raft of often overlapping problems that burden the lives and limit the horizons of our young people: teen pregnancy; unemployment; delinquency; child or substance abuse; and others. A growing proportion of America's children needs easy access to a broad array of high quality services and supports that seek to prevent, as well as to treat, their problems and that recognize the interrelationship among their education, social service, health, child welfare, mental health, and employment and training needs. Instead, many American families are lost in a catch-as-catch-can non-system of public and private services. Too often, this fragmented system offers too little, too late. (p. 6)

Diminishing resources is another factor leading to the current interest in IAC. Several years ago when there were fewer students identified with special needs and circumstances, some schools and school jurisdictions provided minimal levels of health and social services through their school and district resources. In recent times, budget cuts have forced public institutions to limit their activities to their specific mandates. School boards can no longer afford to, or be expected to, provide non-instructional services. Swan and Morgan (1993) concur that, "tight economic times, paired with increasing needs for services, create greater competition for available dollars" (p. 211). Increasing numbers of children with more severe problems strengthen the argument for a restructured system of children's services.

In summary, the impetus for interagency collaboration includes deteriorating social conditions, diminishing resources, and perhaps most notably, the glaring inadequacies of the present human services delivery system which is unable to meet the growing numbers of children with urgent and diverse needs. Improved outcomes for students and parents will be the true test of these initiatives. Studies which examined the nature of successful IAC projects, the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of IAC, and the challenges are described in the next section

The Nature, the Factors, and the Challenges

The enormity of the challenges in establishing IAC is well documented. To facilitate the creation and maintenance of IAC projects, Alberta Education (October, 1993) published *The Art of Working Together*, presented at a conference attended by participants from throughout the province. A number of barriers and special considerations were identified. These were: a competitive, adversarial model of problem solving (turf protection); lack of time and resources; specialization over generalization (demands for specialized services can impede planning for addressing multi-dimensional problems through coordinated, comprehensive programming);

inflexible bureaucratic structures (e.g., narrow definitions of organizational efficiency); bureaucratic reorganization; geographic barriers; lack of knowledge regarding the process on interagency relations (pp. 13-14). *The Art of Working Together* also addresses a number of special considerations which challenge IAC. The list includes the need for a clear description of agency responsibilities for human and other resources, identifying the organization which will house the project, reporting relationships for staff, legislative authority for the project, and the mandate of individual group members with respect to the collaborative as well as to the individual's parent organization(pp. 43-45).

Similar organizational challenges have been identified in studies and articles referring to the situation in the United States. Behrman (1992) highlights the magnitude of the tasks in suggesting that "the almost infinite variations in the needs of particular children and families make forging these ties a formidable challenge" (p. 4). Reference to the diverse needs presented by today's students is provided by Morrill (1992) who suggests that a major problem in coordinating services provided by education, health, and social services is the "inability to deal with children with multiple problems in an effective, coordinated way" (p. 32).

With respect to the involvement of other partners, the degree to which the attitudes, abilities and experience of parents, school staff, and agency staff influences the effectiveness of IAC is of major interest. The literature clearly suggests that a change from the "expert" model, wherein agency personnel provide the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment, usually in a unilateral manner, is required. The meaningful involvement of all partners, and their level of skills and commitment are cited as important factors in a number of studies.

Zahner, Pawelkiewicz, and DeFrancesco (1992) surveyed parents and teachers in assessing the mental health service needs of 822 children. These authors reinforce "the importance of interagency collaboration and the need to consider reports of parents and teachers" (p. 951). In their study on individualizing services for emotionally disturbed youngsters, MacFarquhar, Dorwich, and Risley (1993) found that, although "interagency collaboration was cited most often as leading to the success of this approach . . . . re-educating service providers to creatively plan for each youth individually was identified as the greatest challenge" (p. 165).

For groups of students who are among the most difficult to accommodate in regular classes, those with conduct disorders, Short and Shapiro (1993) conclude that successful intervention may need to focus on the child's natural ecology. Their study described four clusters of correlates--personal, family, school, and peers--the combination of which suggests that schools "may need to abandon traditional placement or exclusion activities and adopt a comprehensive strategy focusing on interagency collaboration and parent involvement and intervention" (p. 362). This need to involve the student's partners is confirmed by other researchers, and further highlights the importance of ongoing, meaningful participation by parents and service providers from other agencies. Duchnowski and Friedman (1990) reviewed services for children with emotional disorders and their families during the 1980s and found that major challenges included "training and human resource development, funding for services, research, interagency collaboration, overall service system development, advocacy, and children at risk for developing serious emotional disorders" (p. 3).

Putting people from different agencies together in a cooperative service mode is not enough to ensure the provision of coordinated, integrated services. Service providers must show their commitment by being available on an ongoing basis to assist students, parents and the school in identifying and resolving problems. The importance of involvement, skills, and commitment of all partners in IAC was pursued in this study by examining perceptions regarding the influence of attitudes, abilities, and experience of partners in the effectiveness of IAC.

Other factors which may contribute to the effectiveness of IAC include organizational matters such as the type of model used, governance, roles and responsibilities, and school organization approaches. Several studies concur with the premise that clear reporting structures, roles and responsibilities, and expectations for teamwork are needed, but there is mixed opinion regarding governance and whether to use a school-based or community-based model. Although most authors agree with the benefits of having the agency staff located in the school, Chaskin and Richman (1992) caution that there is a tendency for the school "to control or dominate the planning or governance of school-linked services" (p. 108). Certainly this needs to be addressed and balanced, however, the benefits in terms of accessibility, service provision, and information sharing may make the school more suitable than other settings in the community. Gardiner (1992) also supports the notion of avoiding single ownership, but places more emphasis on the process and people involved.

> No one agency should "own" the process. In addition to education, health, and social services agency leaders, the team should include representatives of community and neighborhood groups, line workers, and parents. This team must carefully address questions of targeting, governance, financing, evaluation, and information sharing." (p. 85)

Achieving true IAC takes time and requires dramatic change, particularly in the way that staff views their overall approach to the way in which services are planned and delivered. Thompson (1993) suggests that, "to realize the vision of change, the culture of all the institutions and agencies in the collaborative must change" (p. 82), and that this change must be of a systemic nature.

> Even those who agree on a common goal and who share staff and accountability can become so absorbed in designing individual projects to help a small number

> of children and families at the service delivery level that they never get around to changing systems--making permanent improvements in service delivery. (p 17)

Addressing issues such as governance, funding, roles and responsibilities of school and agency staff, and meaningful involvement of parents is clearly essential when dealing with additional personnel from other agencies. Thompson (1993) suggests that "one way to institutionalize a collaborative is to conduct its operation under the auspices of city, county, or state government" (p. 86). His concept of "institutionalizing" IAC is occurring in Alberta where considerable activity is taking place provincially at the minister level, municipally at the mayor level, and locally at the school board level. A major Alberta initiative is the Coordination of Services for Children project which involves four ministries--education, health, justice, and social services--in five communities. The five communities--Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Webasca-Desmarais, and Wetaskiwin--each identified issues, target groups, and services that are pertinent to the particular community. Since this project is in its early stages, detailed evaluation information is unavailable at this time.

A Canadian study described the challenges and issues that caused the failure of the Community Child Abuse Team interagency project in Hamilton, Ontario. Byles (1985) identified issues related to control; the individuals responsible for implementing the project lacked the power to carry through with the project as had been planned at the initial phase. Byles claims that authority must accompany responsibility for decisions in order for IAC to succeed. This has implications for governance in Alberta where the education department is proposing decentralized decision making in its educational reforms.

The preceding suggest that addressing factors pertaining to students, other partners, and organizational matters is essential in establishing a successful collaborative project.

The Benefits

As mentioned earlier, there is little evidence in the literature to suggest that IAC leads to improved student outcomes. Most studies, reports, and opinion articles focus on process issues. Some have indicated that if people feel better about coordinating other agency services with schooling, this in itself is worthwhile. Gomby and Larson (1992) reflect this sentiment in their article reviewing the evaluation of school-linked services in the United States: "when no other measures show improvement, but costs are equivalent and students, families, and the staff feel happier as a result of a new program, the program may well be judged a success" (p. 81). This is a rather narrow view which may be understandable given the complexities of IAC, and the number of factors involved in student achievement. Focusing on outcomes however, should not be understated, even though measuring and linking them to initiatives such as IAC may be difficult.

One study, by Pandiani and Maynard (1993), reported a number of process benefits as well as improvements in relations between students and staff. These authors evaluated a project involving a team system for coordinating services to children and adolescents who were experiencing severe emotional difficulties. The study used a survey of 103 team members involved in the project, and found an improvement in the coordination between caregivers, communication between local agencies and state providers, family involvement, and relationships between children and caregivers (p. 85).

In discussing their review of IAC projects in the United States, Melaville and Blank (1992), also reported benefits to processes and outcomes, but did not describe the outcomes or how they were determined:

> (a) easy access to a wide array of prevention, treatment, and support services, (b) techniques to ensure that appropriate services are received and adjusted to

> meet the changing needs of children and families, (c) a focus on the whole family, (d) agency efforts to empower families within an atmosphere of mutual respect, and (e) an emphasis on improved outcomes (p. 36)

This focus on process is reinforced in Alberta for example, by the education department's Business Plan (Alberta Education, 1994) which identifies the goal "to improve the coordinated delivery of services for special needs children," and describes the measure to determine the extent to which "students with special needs have access to the services they require" in terms of satisfaction "with the accessibility, effectiveness, and efficiency of programs and services" (p. 15). The Alberta project, Coordination of Services for Children, also identifies a number of anticipated process benefits in the first newsletter (Alberta Government, 1993): "family-focused service delivery, better services for children and their families, streamlined processes that minimize intrusion into children's lives, increased and easier access to services, better use of existing resources, increased local decision making, services structured to make sense for each community" (p. 1).

Summary

In summary, the literature suggests that IAC is becoming a necessity to meet the diverse, complex needs of many of today's students. There is mounting evidence, both in practice and research, to indicate that benefits can accrue from this approach, particularly in process areas such as access to services. Few studies however, focus on the relationship between IAC and improved outcomes for students, particularly in terms of academic achievement and attitudes. The complexity of issues that influence student achievement could be one reason for this. By combining perceptions with evaluation information acquired systematically by the school district, this study describes what two groups of IAC partners are experiencing and perceiving in terms of a possible relationship between IAC and student outcomes.

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used for this qualitative study is described under the headings, research design, sample, data collection, and data analysis. An overview of the pilot study is also provided.

Research Design

A situational analysis case study was used to examine issues from the viewpoint of students, parents, school and agency staff in two schools where IAC has been operating for two years. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants from each respondent group to facilitate in depth exploration of perceptions about the IAC project in the two schools. Key informants who were knowledgeable about the IAC project in their school were used for the study. In addition, many of the interview questions were open ended which also helped to ensure the collection of data that was rich in meaning and quantity. Evaluation information describing student achievement, attendance, attitudes, enrolment, and staff attitudes for one of the schools was also obtained and analyzed. This information, compiled annually by the school district, is used to report each school's results for the previous school year.

The use of two techniques to gather data provided an opportunity to compare perceptions with some objective data. This form of verification, along with consistent messages about the descriptive nature of the study, and the use of a systematic process for conducting interviews, served to reduce evaluation apprehension among respondents. Validity threats such as mono-operational method and instrumentation were also reduced through these measures.

Sample

The target population consisted of schools located in a metropolitan area that were involved in a formal IAC project. Limitations to external validity cannot be overcome in a study such as this, however, the processes used in the IAC work in the selected schools likely apply to similar projects in other schools. The study was more concerned with the transferability of the processes than with specific aspects related to the population.

Assistance from district administrators in identifying schools in which IAC was well established provided a small accessible population from which to choose. The principals of two junior high schools were contacted to discuss the feasibility of using their schools for the study. Both schools are located in communities characterized by considerable behaviour problems among the students, and conflict within families. The principals agreed to participate, and their assistance was sought in identifying likely candidates for the interviews. From the list of potential interviewees, four year nine students, four parents, five agency staff, and five school staff (three teachers and the two principals), were identified. The agency staff included two social workers, a health care worker, a youth worker, and a police officer. Each of these individuals was a member of the site-based IAC project team, and had an ongoing relationship with the school in working with students, families, and school staff. All of these individuals were experienced with the school's IAC project, and were deemed likely to offer forthright responses which would be representative of perceptions of the school's IAC project.

Respondents were informed about the study by phone or in person. They signed consent letters which provided further details of the study as well as information about anonymity and their right to opt out at any time. Parents of the four students were also informed of the study by phone, and provided with consent letters which they signed.

Pilot Project

A pilot project involving an interview with a teacher from another location who was experienced with interagency collaboration was conducted. The interview was tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the questions, and other aspects of the interview process. The interview was transcribed, coded and analyzed to improve understanding of the teacher's responses. This individual also assisted in analyzing the interview content and process. The initial interview schedule containing 35 questions was found to be excessive and too structured. Questions that were poorly worded, unclear, or biased were revised or omitted. The number of questions was reduced to 17 and were changed to a more open ended format. A copy of the revised interview schedule is provided in Appendix 1.

Data Collection

In-depth interviews with the four students, four parents, five school staff, and five agency staff were conducted at a time and place convenient to the respondents. Interviews with the students and parents were scheduled for approximately 30 minutes and with school and agency staff for about one hour. Some of the interviews took longer than what was originally scheduled. Essential information from the interviews were respondents' perceptions of the impetus, the nature and key factors in effective IAC, the benefits, and challenges.

Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed either by a professional secretary, or by the researcher. Respondents were given a copy of their transcript, and asked to contact the researcher if they had any questions or problems concerning any of the information found in the transcript. Since none of the respondents followed up, it was assumed that they concurred with the accuracy of the transcripts.

Evaluation information from one of the two schools comparing 1992-93 and 1993-94 school results concerning student achievement, attendance, attitudes, enrolment, and staff attitudes was obtained from the school district administration.

Data Analysis

A content analysis of the interview data was conducted. Information was initially grouped into four categories: (a) impetus, (b) factors, (c) benefits, and (d) challenges. A fifth category, labeled the nature of the IAC, was used following further analysis. This thematic analysis included both inductive and deductive processes.

Comments were grouped into the impetus category if they made reference to issues pertaining to the school's history, family dynamics, or student needs--academic or non-educational. Comments that alluded to processes or the qualities of people that 'helped make it work' were grouped into the factors category. While discussing these factors, many respondents referred to values and beliefs regarding the purposes and service delivery approaches, to features about the IAC project that were unique or different compared to the situation before IAC, and to organizational features such as the school-based model, ownership, control, and mandates. It was decided to classify these comments into a category that would describe the respondents' perceptions about 'what it looks like', a category that was labeled the nature. Criteria for selecting comments for the benefits category were items which referred to improved outcomes for the following.

1. Students, in areas such as: achievement, attendance, attitudes, behaviour, citizenship, organizational and study skills, participation in school and class activities, relations with others, responsibility level, strategies for learning and behaviour;

2. Parents, in areas such as: attitudes, knowledge about their child's needs and programming requirements, knowledge and skills in dealing with their child at home, and knowledge and skills in serving as an effective advocate for their child;

3. School staff, in areas such as: attitudes, providing appropriate programming for individual students, accessing services needed by students, programming to meet a variety of student needs; and

4. Agency staff, in areas such as: attitudes, providing appropriate intervention, and the general provision of services helpful to students, parents and the school (planning, service delivery, evaluation, and use of resources).

Throughout conversations about the nature of the IAC project, and about the factors that make it work, some respondents referred to challenges, disadvantages, or frustrations. These comments were grouped into the challenges category. Other respondents, even when asked to cite disadvantages, were unable to do so. A small number of comments were grouped into more than one category since they appeared to apply equally to each.

A deductive process was used to group data into themes and sub-themes which were established in part from the researcher's experience, and in part from the literature review. Following this, open coding and coding frames were applied to the interview data. This was conducted to identify data that did not fit into the categories used in the deductive analysis. A small number of comments which referred to respondents' expectations, or their vision of IAC for the future, did not fit into one of the previous categories and were discounted.

Comments were further grouped into more sub-categories which emerged from the analysis. Comments made by different respondents which reflected specific ideas were used as the unit of analysis. Ellipses were used to connect phrases or sentences in order to capture the ideas with some brevity, and to use units that could be counted. The number and percentage of comments made by individuals in the four respondent groups were then counted and summarized in Tables 1 through 11.

Evaluation information comparing 1992-93 and 1993-94 school results concerning student achievement, attendance, attitudes, enrolment, and staff attitudes was compared to the comments grouped into the benefits category. This provided an opportunity to confirm the trustworthiness of data pertaining to student and staff benefits obtained during interviews.

Chapter Four

THE RESULTS

Interviews were conducted with four students, four parents, five members of the school staff, and five agency personnel in the two schools. The interview comments were classified into the following five categories with the percentage of the total coded responses provided for each category: (a) the impetus--9%, (b) the nature of the IAC--22%, (c) the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the IAC project--29%, (d) the benefits--29%, and, (e) the challenges--10%. Data from these interviews are discussed, along with findings obtained from an analysis of information concerning student achievement, attendance, attitudes, and enrolment, and staff attitudes which is compiled annually by the school board.

The Impetus

There were 177 comments related to the conditions or needs in the school and community which provided the impetus for establishing IAC in the two schools. Approximately three-quarters of these were classified into five categories: (a) student needs: students with multiple needs who are 'at risk' for school failure--21%, (b) the need for coordinated, integrated, non-educational services including treatment and crisis intervention--15%, (c) family problems such as, marriage breakups, conflicts among teens and parents, child welfare issues, and financial issues--14%, (d) school problems--13%, and (e) violence, among peers, in the home, including sexual assaults and suicide--10%.

Student Needs

Approximately 21% of the comments related to the impetus were classified into this category. Respondents in all four groups referred to the multitude of learning, social, and emotional needs experienced by students. Comments in this and later sections point to the difficulties many of these students have in achieving school success. Interviews revealed that over half of the students were involved in services provided during the 1992-93 school year when the project was in its initial year at School B. Poverty, teen violence, child abuse, substance abuse, sexual assault, teen pregnancies, criminal activity, court appearances, incarceration, and custody cases were among the issues mentioned by respondents when asked to describe the reasons for embarking on IAC at their school. One of the agency respondents indicated that education was a low priority for many students who were living under frightening and negative circumstances with many unmet needs. As one of the student respondents suggested, "we're sort of all the kids that none of the other schools want."

> Sample Comments:
>
> kids have got problems, drug problems . . . problems within family . . . everyday things
>
> if you're being abused . . . it's a total drag. . . . everything goes down, and you just lose self-esteem. . . . your marks stay really low. . . . I can relate to that
>
> feel the urgency of it, because it's right there. . . . in our classrooms . . . our hallways
>
> I could not get over the number of kids in need
>
> we have a group of kids this year that we're going to attendance board
>
> kids that are in crisis . . . school personnel . . . can't provide those kids with enough
>
> abhorrent behaviour. . . . doesn't need education . . . needs treatment
>
> been abused . . . sitting there upset and they're crying. . . . can't handle these things
>
> kids who were thrown out. . . . weapons . . . missing school . . . drop in kids . . . issues about kids' safety. . . . the perceptions of kids as well
>
> fifty something kids in child welfare
>
> pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases . . . and garbage that keeps them from being successful kids
>
> kids are out of control in home, school . . . community . . . average is probably five or six agencies . . . with a kid
>
> the first referral was a young man whose single parent mother had suddenly died . . . . in need of all kinds of support . . . grandparents fighting over . . . custody

> 140 referrals later . . . that first year, we sort of took a deep breath around about February
>
> that priority [education] gets lost . . . because of other needs that go unmet. . . . if you need something to eat or you need to get to school, or if things have been really noisy in the family until late hours . . . what we expect of kids . . . is based on . . . tidy middle class expectations that just don't apply to a lot of people
>
> a very high needs school. . . . percentage of kids . . . part of Project B . . . it's high

Need for Coordinated, Integrated, Non-educational Services

Of the 27 comments regarding the need for more and improved services to address the non-educational issues faced by students, 17 were suggested by the school staff who expressed feelings of helplessness in trying to accommodate large numbers of students with serious social and emotional needs. Three of the comments were offered by students, four by parents, and three by agency staff.

> Sample Comments:
>
> some people--it's happened to them [abuse], but they don't know who to tell
>
> decided that we needed to look at different ways to get services to teenagers
>
> there was recognition that we really had a need here. . . . what are we doing to meet this need Dr. X? We need your help! The recognition is there, and that's important
>
> when it was initiated . . . was a need for support services in the school
>
> we need to get this kid into treatment
>
> school personnel were perceiving the need. . . . crying out for help
>
> sometimes we're a little less than gracious in our requests for service because we are up to our necks in alligators
>
> there's not many resources down the street
>
> we didn't know what to do with a lot of them. . . . didn't know where to go . . . we could listen to kids . . . but. . . . by the time we could get . . . help . . . more weeks the kids had to endure
>
> only way . . . get things done was to work in connection with . . . agencies--get . . . agencies to take the work we . . . were doing on their behalf. . . . agencies . . . not talked to one another . . . duplicating . . . one another's work. . . . stopping at a certain line and saying it's not my job. . . . there's holes and gaps

> families had to tell their stories over and over . . . to talk about all this misery . . . it becomes real. . . . you don't see . . . any optimistic way out. . . . many very troubled families who have been taken for such a long time
>
> a need for all kinds of supports. . . . first day of school we had a suicide kid
>
> hard part . . . selling the problem so somebody else would take it on. . . . the only way I can fix my kid . . . who has addiction problems . . . control problems, child welfare issues . . . family issues, is to involve all of those agencies. . . . I couldn't fix that
>
> concerned about gaps in services to adolescents. . . . weren't interested in duplicating service . . . . trying to meet gaps in service. . . . [adolescents] need to be loudly advocated for
>
> high proportion of multi-problem families, where people don't have cars . . . money . . . not easy for a mom . . . and a dad, to go to the south side or close to the centre of the city for resources that are needed

Family Problems

Difficulties in the home including marriage breakdown, parent-child conflict, child welfare issues, and financial issues were reported in this category which comprised 14% of the comments related to the impetus for establishing IAC at the school. Students, parents, and school staff contributed almost 90% of the comments in this category.

> Sample Comments:
>
> family problems . . . bad enough you have to be taken out of your home, or . . . stay there and try to figure things out with your parents
>
> there's a lot of dysfunction in families that isn't being looked into. . . . that's absolutely critical to what's happening to kids
>
> came to say, my Grandpa' died, my Mom was drunk again last night, my Dad hit me again
>
> we've taken a few kids . . . on emergency from Child Welfare
>
> a great deal is Child Welfare. . . . a reality of our school situation
>
> the people we serve are typically disenfranchised
>
> families do break up . . . have to find cheaper housing . . . close to a school. . . . more difficulties over the years. . . . kids who have difficulties now at school or at home, there's way more
>
> poverty . . . dysfunctional families . . . kids being beaten, oppressed, sexually assaulted

> pregnant. I'm going to have an abortion tomorrow. . . . by the way, my Dad and Step Mom have now thrown me out. Mom has thrown me out the week before. . . . living on the street

School Problems

Respondents described a situation of individuals and students in general in the school as having considerable difficulty with their schooling, particularly in areas of student achievement and behaviour. School staff contributed almost half of the comments coded to this sub-category, which comprised approximately 13% of the comments classified to the section on the impetus for establishing IAC. Respondents spoke of low marks, suspensions and expulsions, and other problems which affected the ability of many students to participate effectively in school. As one of the student respondents mentioned, "getting 50% here is lucky for a lot of people". Other sample comments provided below reflect these sentiments.

> Sample Comments:
>
> a lot of kids have being expelled or suspended
>
> many students need counseling. . . . your marks stay really low
>
> a lot of conduct forms
>
> my marks went down. . . . I've noticed a lot of students are like that
>
> lots of these kids fall through the cracks
>
> labeled a trouble maker and noise maker, and of course he was--why not interrupt . . . I don't know what I'm doing anyway, right
>
> suspensions or detention or whatever
>
> it didn't just affect the really bad kids--it affected all the students in different ways
>
> we look at school history of those kids . . . pretty traumatic history
>
> supposed to be normal, regular mainstream kids , that within weeks, we were identifying as having significant issues
>
> a lot of kids . . . coming . . . with specific kinds of problems
>
> our brilliant kids here at School B are average
>
> kids who have difficulties now at school . . . there's way more
>
> a lot of our kids need time

> had abilities, but just sort of putting out mediocrity which was the norm at our school. . . . the height of production at our school, mediocrity
>
> some of the kids have problems making Saturday [classes]

Violence

This category comprised 10% of the comments related to the impetus for establishing IAC at the two schools. All of the comments were provided by students and school staff members. Respondents in these two groups indicated an urgent need to address the issue of violence; in the home, in the community, and in the school. Fighting among teens, violence in the home, sexual assaults, and suicide were reported. Respondents indicated that dealing with issues and conflict using violence had been quite common in recent years. One of the teacher respondents spoke of her fear about the prospect of students being subjected to sexual assault, and of her worries about the possibility of a student committing suicide. The sample comments by these respondents were expressed very openly, and with a tone of despair and seriousness regarding these issues.

Sample Comments

> a kid getting beat up by their parents
>
> school was full of people that wanted to beat people up. . . . a lot of conflicts . . . fights
>
> they're being beat at home. . . . abused at home
>
> a lot of fighting and swearing
>
> those people are the ones that are fighting all the time and are having problems dealing with their feelings and with problems
>
> [student] was sexually molested by [adult]
>
> some of the boys are particularly abusive to the girls
>
> violence is in our community. . . . kids live this
>
> one girl. . . . tried to commit suicide. . . . we have no idea what it's like
>
> [staff] saying that I've got a kid sitting at the back of the . . . room with his fly unzipped, fondling himself, there's a knife in his back pocket, and glaring . . . felt that she was in jeopardy . . . [not] concerned about teaching . . . concerned about protecting herself

> youngster with the six inch blade knife not too long ago was out of control home and school and community, was on some recommended psychotherapy drugs, not taking them, was in a psychiatric intervention process--was not complying
>
> young man who was involved in the shooting . . . was a former student
>
> she said I'm going to kill myself today. . . . I believe that. . . . we'd have lost a kid
>
> I want my kid apprehended who's being sexually assaulted by the father
>
> went to her mom and said look. . . . your boyfriend is having sex with me. . . . I think I'm pregnant, are you going to listen now?

Additional Issues Regarding the Impetus

The previous five categories represented almost 75% of the comments related to the needs and conditions for establishing IAC at the two schools. The remaining comments were grouped into the following categories: (a) social-emotional problems--8%, (b) the reputation of the school and the community--8%, (c) substance abuse among teens and in the home--5%, and (d) issues related to the law, including students on probation--5%. Approximately 70% of the comments coded to these four sub-categories were contributed by students and school staff members. Parents provided eight of these comments, and agency staff members provided four. Respondents cited examples of inter-personal relationship problems, attitudes towards others, tolerance, low self-esteem, and behaviour problems at school. Drug and alcohol issues, and examples of criminal activity were also reported.

> Sample Comments:
>
> don't even think some of the people notice how many insults. . . . a lot of this going on
>
> some of the people in the group are really rude
>
> the type who think they're too tough and macho
>
> people out there . . . don't like you because of this and this. . . . people that are jealous
>
> he's never been intimidated at school. . . . same attitude that he had before. . . . been labeled a trouble maker and a noise maker, and of course he was

a loner. . . . afraid to be friends with him because. . . . it was a risk to be his friend

those kids who are having difficulties come in and want to linger . . . make contact

not because they want to offend me. . . . that's their culture . . . environment

need help . . . really depressed

kids that drive me crazy are the ones who come in here and say, I don't care, do what you want with me. . . . really sad

for some of our families and young people--the V on their foreheads for victim, the helplessness and hopelessness

so they generalize that to every area of their life--they're just not good people and they can't do anything

for years School B had a bad name, it was a tough neighbourhood

people don't expect anything positive to come out of our school

active in drugs and alcohol

she was on the street. . . . drug and alcohol issues

drug problems--just slowly try and get you off them

I deal with a lot of kids who have been in trouble with the law

kids in this school . . . have probation, community hours

a lot from Blackfoot Youth Centre, Pineview Young Offenders Centre

so many resources had gone into this family over the years . . . still at square zero

The Nature

There were 444 comments related to the nature of the IAC in the two schools. The comments were grouped into four categories: (a) organizational features including the school-based model, ownership and decision making, mandates and supervision, funding and resources--37%, (b) unique or different features--33%, (c) the philosophy and purposes--15% , and (d) service delivery approaches--14%. The distribution of comments to this major category was approximately as follows: school staff--40%, agency staff--30%, parents 20%, and students--10%.

Organizational Features

Approximately 37% of the comments related to the nature were classified under organizational features. School and agency staff members provided over 72% of the responses. Students and parents contributed comments primarily during discussion about the school-based model. Although respondents pointed to many significant advantages of locating the project in the school, a number of concerns were expressed which are discussed in the section on challenges. Opinions regarding ownership and control, mandates and staff supervision, and funding and resources were also coded into this sub-category, and are highlighted by the sample comments provided below. Comments which expressed concerns about these issues are also described in the section dealing with challenges.

Sample Comments:

The School-Based Model

> its good to have them at our school. . . . you know where they are, they're available, its just easier for everybody. . . . can get at them easier
>
> If it was downtown, it would never get used, 'cause nobody would take the time to go downtown just to see these people
>
> It's beyond important, it's just--it has to be here or we're going to fall apart again

I can't see them . . . being in a community league . . . their own little office. . . . I mean, it's basically kids is who they're trying to help

the school is the logical place to house--'cause that's where the kids are

if you've got to run downtown or over to the south side like Childrens' Psychiatric Centre or something, you think twice . . . put it off a little while longer

having them on site. . . . that would be my greatest advantage

we kept coming back to the schools. . . . blew this guy away . . . he . . . tried to steer us in other directions and we kept coming back to the school

if you have kids, that's the one place you're all going to be. . . . here every day, and you've got access. . . . to the kids, access to the service people

benefits of having it in the school far outweigh the challenges. . . . Leaps and bounds! Leaps and bounds!

I believe that regions of schools need access to an interagency team. And that interagency team doesn't necessarily have to be in a school. . . . it's not so much important--where the program is located as much as the climate for the program. . . . if the rapport-building, the trust relationship happens to be in a community health nurse, or a police officer, then locate to there instead. Locate to wherever the community is going to buy in, where the community sees a helping agent

In the community it would make it a little tougher for us to access--physically. . . . not as handy for me as walking down to Room 102 and asking our police officer to come and arrest a kid

from our perspective as a school, it's certainly easier, more efficient. I don't know how the other agencies will respond to that

I think it needs to vary . . . I would wish for us not to create rules that say, this is where it must be, but to let each community make it work for them

there are pros and cons to both [school and community]. . . . the pro is we have really good access to the kids

if you really want to . . . have access you almost need to do it in the school. . . . at the community league you wouldn't have access to near the kids

this is where they [students] are. . . . out of my office I wouldn't see anyone--kids aren't going to come looking for services unless they're in a crisis

we have easy access to the kids, and they have easy access to us. . . . out in the community it would be a tougher draw

many benefits to having it in the school: accessibility to kids, parents, school staff; promotes teamwork

there's no more logical place than to be based in the school

Ownership and Control

that's what this collaborative is doing . . . no one gets control here

Project A is still separate from. . . . they're within the school, and they're part of it, but . . . they're not team players of the school . . . a team itself

it's an extension of the community more than the school

I have to ensure that I'm in control of what comes down in this building. . . . that is the bottom line. . . . we have not been in the position where I've had to move to that [veto] because the collaboration and the communication has been really up front

initial stages there may . . . be too much school domination. . . . over time, and if you get the right people involved, it doesn't have to be that way

from [school's] point of view, it's a very strong model having it here in the school. . . . other agencies . . . see the school as driving a lot of the business, and . . . well, we do, because we see these kids for many hours every day and we know more about them than just about anybody. . . . know about the families than just about anybody

in a community league, they [the school] wouldn't have . . . ownership and . . . control

some issues with school policies, but not a major problem

some difficulties early on with working in the school site. . . . they must have been worked out, because I can't even remember what they are

Mandates and staff supervision

got their separate jobs, but they'll help you with anything that they can help you with

they don't want . . . this is my mandate. . . . check your hat at the door; and do what's necessary for the kid

We don't really have roles, we're just partners

a group of experts putting their personal expertise aside and looking for new ways to do things, and then doing them together, all of them together

they weren't too interested in personal niches for their organizations, because the organizations were fully supportive of what they were doing

that [staff responsibilities, reporting structures] hasn't gotten in the way

there's been good communication, good groundwork laid there right from the beginning that has been helpful [regarding mandates] [see also, Factors, Teamwork]

the flexibility and letting go of the boundaries for each agency is really--has an affect on the project as well

supervision has never been an issue here . . . get supervised back at our office

peer supervision is what we are also trying to provide

if it's very clear that this is a child welfare mandate, because child welfare, justice . . . have very clear mandates, then--that's who gets it. If it's more fuzzy, then its . . . who has the time, or . . . the relationship already with this family and would be the least intrusive to deal with it

people aren't getting upset . . . for getting into one another's areas

understanding each others mandates

not only the [agency person] . . . I'm a friend . . . an educator . . . a counselor. . . . I deal with thousands . . . I haven't . . . dealt with on the street

not in my regular job description

you have to change your hat depending on the situation

not in their mandates, but they still do it

Sometimes it falls within a domain that's not clearly coming from a specific role. Sometimes it has to do with the style of the people . . . of the team. . . . we all come as a role . . . with personalities . . . with specific skills; things that we do well, and things we do less well

it's not really obviously something that may lead into the medical or the child welfare, or whatever domains . . . then might be whoever would have a sense of . . . that's the sort of thing I could do

not worry too much whose turf . . . respect that and use one anothers expertise . . . main thing is . . . a kid or family in crisis, get on, get working

Funding and Resources

As economically as possible

a bunch of dollars that have been put forward from Parks and Rec to do that kind of thing. Yea, so money is coming through the agencies

hate to see it leave. . . . I hope funding isn't a reason . . . my number one concern

we come back to money, and facilitating . . . but I really believe in it

we've got support at the higher level

we don't want to be setting up an organization here that is going to be driven by bucks that are a central focus to the program

coordinator right now that is helping us tee up . . . things . . . we would like to think that within a couple of years that we'll put this guy out of work

we've got to be cautious with [money] . . . as long as good things are happening for kids . . . these organizations will continue to see the benefit of doing business here

for me it's a freeing up of resources

advantage of Project B is that you're given sanction at a very high level in our province

she's really knowledgeable and can tell you what's happening in the community . . . and how we can maybe get some money here and there

> can really capitalize on, and they can use our strengths, and so that's the piece about sharing resources, rather than just referring back and forth
>
> who uses what [resources] and how, I think--at this point that ownership has been more back at our offices still, so once we've committed the time--my supervisor couldn't care less what projects I'm involved in as long as I'm putting the time in and fitting in with the team
>
> the sharing of resources
>
> as we start working together and tearing down more barriers and utilizing each others resources more, it'll be more efficient and effective

Unique or Different Features

This category comprised 33% of the comments related to the nature of the IAC project in the school. Approximately 53% of the comments were contributed by school staff, with the other three respondent groups providing 14% to 18% each. Respondents in all four groups readily discussed their perceptions of the unique or different features of the project in their school. Students, parents, and school staff members who have had experience at the school for a number of years described very positive feelings about the quality of the services and quality of team members, the impact on the school environment, and the changes among students which respondents attributed to meeting needs which had not been addressed in the past. As one school staff member put it, "we've given back to the agencies the work that they do best. . . . I as one member agency get to do what I do best . . . work with our kids"

Sample Comments

> before, you had this attitude, "oh well, she's getting beat up. . . . none of my business" . . . . in the group, you realize, if you don't stop it, it just goes on to somebody else, and then somebody else, and . . . until you just stop the line of violence
>
> like a kid getting beat up by their parents. . . . they put it to a stop then. . . . don't wait and make you do all this other stuff. . . . get right to it
>
> people are a lot calmer, things have toned down quite a bit
>
> don't get into as many fights. . . . not as many problems . . . just altogether better
>
> the fact that they're not teachers . . . makes everything all better . . . . they're adults and you can talk to them. . . . they let you come up to their level and talk

to you like you are an adult, not like some little kid. . . . teachers have a habit of doing that, 'cause they're teachers, and we're their students

before they came, things were really crazy--there was a lot of fights, there was a lot of people getting suspended and a lot of conduct forms, and a lot of just violence, and now there's a lot less. . . . conduct forms have been less and less . . . if they have a small little conflict and they go to Project B and they talk . . . and everything's better

if you've got a problem, you've gotta go there. I mean, you can't turn to a teacher for that kind of support

the authority figures are assimilated into the community, they're no longer authority figures, they're friends. So you can share information, rather than ratting on a friend

the way things were delivered in the past--going to Dr. A, or therapist B, or whatever, didn't really work that well. . . . duplicated services . . . kids would slide through the cracks . . . family would slide through the cracks when maybe the family was the root of the problem. This way . . . there's enough communication that. . . . it's not going to slide through anywhere, and everything's accessible

way things were going didn't seem to be really filling the need properly

you know he's got help, and it's not going to take weeks and weeks and weeks, because I think you lose a kid in three weeks . . . can send them right down and get them started with one of the agencies

it's incredibly different in that the services are here

they had the social worker to say well--maybe we should look toward . . . the medical side and then the flip side . . . that all areas were covered, and I think that's really important

you're going to be able to get advice and assistance directly from these people. . . . key thing that is different between before and now

the greatest thing is to finally have . . . one central spot, because if you've had any involvement with child welfare or the law, you go from this one to that one, and call this one and call that one, and parents are just ragged by it all. . . . a lot of people I know just give up. . . . wait till the next time something happens to Johnny. . . . so I think just having a source of that kind of information as a parent, it's just so worthwhile, there's no price tag on it, it's invaluable

when the students needed access to something, it was delayed, they had to go through all the steps and paper and all that stuff

services . . . required . . . weren't acquirable until a month down the line. . . . [now] if there is a problem . . . it's dealt with right away

try and provide almost a one stop service area

now issues are dealt with very quickly . . . we get really good response

have had students with weapons at our school, but we know that we have a backup system that responds to us very quickly

different ways of getting the job done . . . sometimes their ways are better have many opportunities to work more proactively than before

invaluable . . . the mental health services, which . . . are difficult to access. . . . we get our kids into those systems readily, easily

those things were not being addressed because people just didn't know. . . . now we know, and it's being dealt with

there were teachers afraid of certain students

in the past I would have to phone downtown or to a district office and say, can I speak to an intake worker. It might be hours before I get a hold of somebody. Whereas now, within minutes . . . to get a hold of somebody. And the problem is taken care of . . . immediately

I don't have to call [police] Station . . . to have a policeman to come over here in 4 hours or get on a list. . . . before I did. . . . we waited for a policeman for 4 hours. . . . with a kid in a time out room, holding him there for 4 hours. . . . now I call [agency staff]. . . . I call him at home!. . . . I say [agency staff], can you come in. . . . he says I'll be in here in a minute

we don't have to have big organized things, it's right here

it took me 3 days to get a social worker . . . to apprehend him

the fact that we've got the same people here all the time. . . . she's up here and she checks on kids . . . that she's seen before

I remember times sitting in my time out room for 45 minutes, an hour and a half waiting for a policeman to come; 911 call!

last year I had a girl . . . you know, there was no where to go. . . . now, they have lots of counseling . . . even parents can . . . get counseling. Before . . . we never knew if they got help

had more vandalism in the school. . . . before we did see that. . . . kids see the school more for them, and if they wreck something they're wrecking for them. . . . before it was--we were seen as the enemy. . . . children were angry

now they . . . deal with it elsewhere then come into the classroom ready to learn

couldn't teach . . . trying to do . . . other roles . . . weren't even trained for. . . . more time to teach . . . . classrooms are more focused. . . . the ones who are there are not distracted by these others

used to be shoving them off to somebody . . . we didn't know what to do . . . . now we know they're getting . . . help they need . . . it's right downstairs

now the parents come in for education things

How would I know how to deal with [student]. . . . needs help. Someone to talk to . . . listen to . . . another girl was suicidal. . . . I'd feel so badly if something happened to these kids, but now. . . . I don't have to worry about these things

kids get the help that they need . . . before it was paper work . . . a bandaid. . . . not really fixed, but they're getting the treatment right now

you just have to look at what we had before. . . . which was not much. . . . no . . . compared to before, it's much better

> big difference that it made for me . . . was that I wouldn't have to work with these gazillion agencies. . . . now I could work with a smaller, more finite group of them
>
> [parents] tell their stories once
>
> Four years ago they couldn't even plan to teach. . . . [now] a non-issue
>
> I have access to textbooks for kids, I have access to records. . . . I've been able to see kids here, pull them out of math class to do my intake interview kind of thing, and get to know them. . . . I've been able to do that during my work hours
>
> deal with more kids. . . . can do more preventative work. . . . fewer kids fall through the cracks
>
> the unique part about it is having all the services in one place. . . . accessibility to the services is phenomenal. . . . the speed to which the services is rendered is phenomenal
>
> the people who have access to medical, legal, health sectors are there--now. . . . not a matter of trying to make a phone link or an in-person link, or encouraging a family to do that. . . . we all go out to families as opposed to them having to get to an appointment somewhere, and to see whether or not they do that. . . . the links are there

Philosophy, Purposes, Initial Stages of the Project

Fifteen percent of the comments related to the nature were classified into this sub-category. A definite purpose of serving students within the school setting was expressed. In addition, several respondents in all four groups stressed the importance of including families. Many comments about the purposes and philosophy referred to the community as the overall focus of the project. Respondents emphasized the importance of involving students and families in identifying and resolving issues. The assistance and guidance of project team members, who were committed to working as partners in attempting to find "different and better ways of offering services to teens", was also highlighted.

Sample Comments:

> To help families and students in the community, and basically just to make things better for everyone
>
> basically kids is who they're trying to help. . . . that's how most of the students see it, is they're here to help me. . . . they're there for support

> opens up the potential for really addressing the root problems, and making sure that the kids have access, 'cause sometimes their parents will say no, and stop something before the kids can get what they need
>
> to share the resources . . . fill the gaps . . . better accessibility to services
>
> I think our mission was very clear to all of us. . . . to help the families in need. . . . provide them with the skills so that they could better help themselves. . . . and resources so they could better help themselves
>
> a healthy, happy community . . . that's what we were all aiming for
>
> it wasn't difficult for us to arrive at a common mission statement. . . . lots of kids in need, lots of families in need
>
> the basic mandate was to help the kids in the school
>
> immediate attention to problems [is the overall purpose]. . . . So that we could teach and not have these blow ups in the classroom
>
> to simplify access to service to families. . . . our goal . . . to help families help themselves
>
> one of the huge goals for us was to give agencies back the work they do, rather than having us try to do their work not as well
>
> bottom line philosophy of: just do it. . . . Figure out how--later. Get permission--later. If a kid is in trouble do what you think has to be done
>
> community-based makes more sense. Interagency makes more sense. And creative breaking of the rules is the way we get things done
>
> to look at issues for teens. . . . what can we do to help . . . adolescents realize success
>
> collaboration is . . . common concerns and goals . . . using strengths
>
> our philosophy is holistic, comprehensive. . . . underlying values . . . involve . . . students, staff . . . parents . . . community
>
> the purpose is to coordinate that so that they are getting a more consistent service
>
> strengthen the community by including . . . kids . . . parents at each step so that they'll be able to be involved in the process . . . including the teachers
>
> bottom line goal . . . service to benefit the children and their families
>
> to provide an environment that, like I said, is safe and healthy

Service Delivery Approaches

Of the 63 comments regarding service delivery approaches, 34 referred to service delivery as being preventive, 11 were coded as case management, and 18 comments referred to both, or to service delivery in general. Respondents in each school stressed a need for both types, although the emphasis between the two schools differed. Respondents attributed this to differing needs among students and families in the two communities.

> Sample Comments:
>
> have a "Did You Know" series, like. . . . The Day in the Life of a Single Mom. . . . a Teenage Mom; and Trying To Raise a Child; Get a Job; Get Schooling . . . Racism
>
> if they [students and families] need counseling, then they can go see a social worker or a psychiatrist. . . . if they're in trouble with the law they can go see [agency staff]
>
> both [preventive and service], because . . . if you need counseling then you go in there and . . . they'll help you. . . . they've set up certain classes, like . . . on anger management . . . on Aids. . . . last month was The Day in the Life of a Single Teenage Mom. . . . so they help you be preventive, but they still . . . offer you services that can help you. . . . they do both
>
> I don't know that we're actually a referral agency. . . . take care of crisis . . . not necessarily geared to be crisis oriented
>
> its probably a lot of both. Preventive, because if they are here you can prevent lots from happening if you nip it at the bud
>
> when it first started, crisis management
>
> have many opportunities to work more proactively than before
>
> more proactive now, but a lot of them are still crisis management
>
> there's somebody there that he can go to that person, and that person can organize getting somebody right away
>
> the health nurse--if there's shots needed, . . . immunization . . . she's taken girls for pregnancy tests . . . talks about sex education
>
> the social skills group. . . . the nutrition group, peer support group
>
> we're concerned primarily with prevention. . . . to prevent issues for students rather than just react to the crises. . . . trying to be more preventive, proactive
>
> we're not trying to really focus on problem kids
>
> don't do cases . . . my mandate is . . . preventive, community focused
>
> its not driven by us as professionals
>
> both crisis management and preventive
>
> I think it's working with everything. . . . you have to cover all those bases. . . . that's basically the whole approach that I'm taking. . . . that's what I feel that everybody else is trying to take as well. . . . continue developing the successes, and base our future growth on that

The Factors

Approximately 29% of the total number of comments focused on the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the IAC projects at the two schools. Within this category, 68% of the comments referred to people--the nature of their involvement, and their qualities or characteristics. Respondents referred to the ways in which different partners conducted themselves and their work, and to qualities related to background, experience, abilities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of various partners. Individuals in all four respondent groups commented on the importance of having skilled and knowledgeable agency staff members who are committed to conducting their work in an integrated fashion. The positive relationships between agency staff and students were frequently highlighted, particularly by students. A smaller number of comments referred to the role played by other partners. Nearly 60% referred to agency staff, 18% to school staff, 15% to parents, and 7% to students.

The remaining 32% of comments in this category focused on teamwork and leadership. In addition to comments about communication, trust, and support, the importance of flexibility and boundary spanning was mentioned several times, especially by agency staff. Several respondents spoke of a preference for shared leadership, although several made a point of commenting positively about the support and leadership that the principals provided to the project.

The People--The Nature of Their Involvement

Comments Referring to Students:

> about 10 or 12 students . . . a teacher . . . [agency staff] and [agency staff] . . . sometimes it's scary in that room because there's so much being vented
>
> if a student is having . . . bad day they can go in there and get a boost . . . go away feeling better
>
> if it was just us kids we'd just sit around and fight . . . its [agency staff] and her group that really pull us together and help us understand . . . give us ideas . . .

sit and they talk with us . . . tell us what we should talk about . . . who we should tell it to . . . get people to listen. . . . they really help us

they don't know who to tell. . . . we make it known to people, like what's happening in the school, what's happening outside of the school . . . and they say "oh, well if they can help stop it then we can too"

the kids . . . have to think of the questions . . . what violence is . . . what sexual harassment is

we found that there's like lots of insults going on in the school . . . so then we asked people like, "what do you think about the insults . . . "

my Mom was scared of me, instead of the other way around. But he had wanted to pull me out of my house a long time before I got out, 'cause I was scared of what my Mom would try and do. Long before I was taken out and put into a home, he wanted to pull me out, but I didn't want to let him, because I didn't know what my Mom would do. And finally one day I just got fed up, and I said get me out of there. And [agency staff] did--immediately

I know I'm going to go [to class] and something's really bugging me . . . then I say . . . I'm going to Project B. . . . teachers prefer . . . do it on . . . own time . . . many understand . . . not something . . . can wait for, go to Project B

kids have referred themselves for tutoring. . . . teachers . . . suggestions, but the kids pretty much come . . . decent numbers . . . they have twelve to eighteen

children have always been included . . . they didn't keep anything from the kids

they're kept involved . . . they have extensive meetings with the child to make sure . . . this is legitimate . . . not just playing the game or whatever

Treatment plan, who decides? They do, they're in charge. The youngster decides whether to follow up on counseling. . . . whether to go and talk to somebody about anger control . . . whether to take their meds

Involving the kids, that's worked really well. . . . they come up with project ideas. . . . responding to what the kids are interested in and want

Comments Referring to Parents:

find ways to include parents in ways . . . they're interested in

if it's a concern, they will contact the parent and just say, well I spoke to your child, and these are my concerns, and then there might be the signing of papers to continue counseling

the parent would only be called in if it did get serious. . . . or possibly get a call to say, I'm seeing your child, and don't worry

whenever a student has a problem and they go and talk to Project B then the parents are notified. Unless it's something like, they're being beat at home or whatever, you know. Then that's different, but. . . . the parents. . . . they have a really good communication if somebody was even remotely interested in coming, I would just say, don't be afraid of these people . . . not to be intimidated by them. If you've got a question, ask it. Nobody's going to jump all over you

my role is to speak for what I perceive parents' issues to be

came out for the focus groups . . . wanted their voice heard . . . there have been a couple gals who've come intermittently . . . and then, we're just too busy with other things

if it's a concern, they will contact the parent . . . I spoke to your child . . . my concerns, and then there might be the signing of papers to continue counseling, or a meeting with the parents

parent decides whether to call . . . and say, look I'm desperate, I need intervention in my family

Comments Referring to School Staff

I may raise heat under the right party in order to say, help me. . . . my role is doing that, more than it is pushing something in their face. . . . so my role was not determining treatment as much as it was withdrawing my service and putting pressure up on the--under the party that needed to have the pressure, in this case not the kid, the parent

all we need to do is . . . write it in there--it's done

If I go talk to him, within a half an hour things will be solved. Whereas before, if a kid came to me and said I'm being beaten at home or I'm not having a good day at home--I'd be with the kid all day. Everything would stop. . . . until that kid was taken care of

don't have to play telephone tag for a week to get a hold of a service provider, and then go through filling out the forms. . . . [agency staff], done!. . . . a meeting tomorrow morning--it's done

Rather than being bad, violent, or angry, or acting out, they say I need to go speak to [agency staff] . . . . the kid could have been miserable, rotten, and horrible. But said, can I go speak to somebody in Project B. Right of math class. The Project B people phone me. . . . they have somebody there to catch them . . . hold them . . . help them

we can teach now

able to get . . . services right away . . . having a relationship with the people in Project B

can communicate with the people. . . . communicate with the physicians

there is good representation from School A in Project A

working with the teachers--individually I've gotten a lot of support here. . . . they've been following up with kids who are being tutored

it's quite appropriate for us to hand over a bit of that, to people who are more capable and better trained to do it

Comments Referring to Agency Staff

They're always going to be there whenever you need something. All I can say is, go. If you need it, go. They're not going to turn you down

if you're being. . . . abused at home or whatever--it's hard. . . . they help them understand that it's okay. Like it's okay to tell, and it's okay to feel sorry, it's okay to be sorry, but it's not okay to be sorry if it's not your fault. Like it's not okay to feel it's your fault

deal with the social--like outside the school, but if it's affecting the in school, well then they'll deal with that

these people will actually spend time with the kids, and some of them have been on ski trips, and outside of school activities

[agency staff] would say, this is what's going on . . . how was she at school?

an opportunity for the Project A staff to sit down and talk with kids

make sure that the people who are participating and on the team, have some sense of mission about a collaborative approach . . . want to be in it

make use of specific expertise, but all must be willing and able to work with kids and families on various issues

a new referral comes . . . a need that's been identified. . . . begin in a meeting by hearing . . . concerns. . . . a decision made in terms of who . . . [will] get involved. . . . what domain does it primarily . . . fall within

sense that . . . people . . . around the room are there to help . . . brainstorm . . . possible solutions . . . talk to one another . . . have the agencies advocating through one other to bring support to that family, rather than the families feeling--is anybody listening, does anybody care, and is anybody going to do something real here to deal with the issues with me

The People--Their Qualities and Characteristics

Comments Referring to Students:

they're softening up a little bit, and realizing . . . if I need help I'm going to go there

you would often have some of those kids who are having difficulties come in and want to linger, and want to make contact

present to people outside, are needy, and frightening . . . they are not like that at all

a lot of the kids . . . I don't know what their background is

we're not trying to really focus on problem kids

working with both sets of kids will help the overall good of the school

there's just different kinds of focus on different kinds of kids. . . . I don't know if the collaborative team will have success in any one area

Comments Referring to Parents:

if you didn't have the right attitude of the parents . . . the attitudes of the kids would be different . . . take after . . . the parents

parents who are aware can have access

I think that the parents are less threatened and more comfortable with . . . other team members than . . . with school administrators

I don't think it [parent background] makes a difference

parent council, they're a wonderful group of parents . . . tremendous . . . work for our school

only the people who have been through [social services] can tell us how it needs to get better

A year ago she was yelling. . . . Now she came in . . . we talked with her young man about . . . issues . . . his plans. . . . we sent [student] back to class . . . talked. . . . she sees me as a helping agent. . . . When I have to . . . get her involvement in future, she's not going to yell at me.

skill of parents is a factor but the frustration level of parents is a huge factor. . . . when we start tearing down that frustration level, and start to helping them to identify clear issues, and start connecting plans to those issues, that they're part of . . . they start taking charge. . . . start owning their school, owning their community, owning their family again

If you don't have the . . . participation of the families. . . . defeats the whole purpose. . . . We have . . . stronger every day. . . . that's where we're getting our successes from

Comments Referring to School Staff:

teachers prefer that you do it on your own time, but many understand that if it's not something you can wait for, go to Project B

if they [school staff] didn't care, then we wouldn't have the group, like they wouldn't have asked [agency staff] and them to build a group

you could go to [school staff] and say this is a problem we're having can it be dealt with . . . [school staff] would make sure the right people knew

a lot of it falls on the school, because people just don't realize it exists. . . . the principal is key

staff were very caring. . . . caring people here, and said . . . no--we want better for you

If there's a great need for her to be there, the teachers will let her

Project B was a critical part of my interview . . . that's good. . . . I feel very comfortable in that kind of multi-disciplinary team

I don't see myself working anywhere else. . . . a close knit bunch of people here

staff at School B are very committed . . . reassured, relieved . . . supported some teachers will be more flexible, some will see the purpose of doing things differently

they actually realized that we needed to be here

Comments Referring to Agency Staff

[agency staff] and her group that really pull us together . . . help us understand what we should do . . . give us ideas . . . talk with us . . . what we should talk about

its their experience and what they know about students and . . . [families]. . . . just the things they said. . . . help motivate you

they sink down to your level or . . . let you rise up to their level, so it's not like an adult talking to a kid, it's an adult to an adult, or a kid to a kid. . . . it's like two equal people

it [difference in age] doesn't matter anymore because you know you can talk to them

I could really see the heart of the people. . . . want to do a good thing for kids. . . . these are people who have a presence in the kids lives

they've been really helpful people to anybody we've sent . . . they've come back to the table and said, oh, thank God, you know--that [agency staff] is a really great guy, or [agency staff] was really helpful in doing this, and so there's really been a lot of positives

genuinely have an interest in working with kids. . . . they refrain from judgment

social/emotional . . . work they do with kids. . . . they have a lot of skills. . . . spent years developing those skills. . . . better able to do that kind of work than I am

very realistic. . . . works with our kind of kids . . . very well . . . a relationship. . . . if they have troubles, or if they have questions regarding the law . . . [agency staff] is there for them

the kids know [agency staff] and because they know him, if [agency staff] has to intervene, it's not as scary, the trust is already there, when he intervenes

trained in their field. . . . they're very good at what they do. . . . make a difference. . . . the people who have chosen to be there, they're all very dedicated

a willingness to work in this way. . . . person who is secure, in their own organization, know what it takes to get things done, and to just go do it. . . . we need the risk-takers

what helps it to work well is, number one, the people . . . chosen for the partnership

Teamwork

it doesn't matter what you need, they can always help you with it. . . . they've got their separate jobs, but they'll help you with anything. . . . they'll help you at any time

cooperation between the agencies, like they interact all the time

teamwork--you've got the staff that can go to the agency, and the agency can approach the parents, or the parents can approach the agency. . . . I look at that as the biggest triangle. The staff to the agency, and the parents to the agency, and the kid's here

the meetings were . . . there was a warm rapport . . . camaraderie . . . laughter . . . tears, there was all kinds of very positive organizational strengths

I get excited is . . . joint projects and a bit outside of what you typically do

all the stuff you have to work out in the group process

as you become more of a team you realize that it's really just people . . . it depends if you can work with that person . . . not . . . that organization

communication [is the single most important factor in making it work]--at all the different levels . . . staff . . . parents, the community, as members

started the whole process with refusing to say, it's not my job ma'am

the flexibility and letting go of the boundaries for each agency is really--has an affect on the project as well

if you're the only one available at that time, and some kid comes in looking for assistance, you've got to be able to help [see also, Nature, Involvement of Agency Staff]

if they are [getting into other domains] it's because they are being asked to and it's helpful [see also, Nature, Mandates and Staff Supervision]

we have to be flexible and we have to be creative, and proactive

I don't experience that as a territorial issue at all. In fact I think everyone realizes the potential problem with that and it gets caught early [see also, Factors, Teamwork]

Leadership

with [agency staff] providing more leadership, and with me taking a serious look at having a desire of having to involving more of my staff, I backed off. . . . to allow more of the staff to be involved to make sure they were providing ownership

Project A's biggest supporter, in terms of providing assistance with space, with promotion, and anything else

were issues of leadership . . . school personnel, by default, ended up taking a lot of leadership

an issue for some people because they wanted a more shared leadership it's more shared. . . . we share the chair and we share the coordination

the administration and the school are very supportive

I don't think the leadership is an issue now. . . . six months into the first year, I think it was

commitment of the principal at School A too, its really made a difference. . . . very supportive of it . . . he's been willing to let us do what we need to do. . . . he's been very patient, never felt any pressure from him, he's created this room . . . our own phone . . . welcoming environment

no such thing as a leaderless group. . . . If you don't appoint one, one's going to emerge

essentially we were going to rotate the chair, and . . . the ability to coordinate and facilitate

our big boss who's on the steering committee is a very big backer. . . . you could probably get by without that support, but not as. . . . effectively, or efficiently. . . . if all the partners and agencies did that, we'd have a phenomenal project. . . . second to none

The Benefits

This category contained 29% of the total number of coded comments. This represented the greatest number of comments among the five major categories. The 590 interview comments coded as benefits were grouped into five sub-categories: (a) benefits to students--53%, (b) benefits to parents--13%, (c) benefits to the school and school staff--18%, (d) benefits to the agencies and agency staff--9%, and (e) general benefits, positive comments--6%. School staff members provided approximately 40% of the comments, with the other three respondent groups contributing approximately 20% each.

Benefits to Students

The interview data classified into this category were grouped into 15 sub-categories. Nine of the sub-categories reflected anticipated outcomes for students, and were identified through a deductive process prior to the interviews. These nine sub-categories, which comprised 68% of the comments related to student benefits, were (a) achievement; (b) attendance; (c) attitudes towards self, others, learning and society; (d) behaviour; (e) citizenship; (f) participation in class and school; (g) relationships with peers and adults; (h) responsibility for learning and behaviour; and (i) strategies and skills related to learning and behaviour including organizational and study skills, decision making skills, and problem solving skills. Over 60% of these comments referred to student achievement and attitudes. Most of the comments were made during discussions of the benefits of the IAC project in their school.

The remaining six sub-categories, representing 32% of the comments in this category referred to more general, process oriented aspects that surfaced as respondents referred to benefits to students. These included (a) greater access to better services; (b) observations of positive change among students; (c) a reduction of problems in areas such as violence, substance abuse, and criminal activity; (d) a safer, calmer, less stressful school and community climate; and (e) fewer problems in the home. Sample comments for each of the fifteen sub-categories follow. A description of school district evaluation information for School B is provided immediately following the presentation of the interview data on student benefits.

Achievement

Respondents spoke of information and assistance gained from attending tutoring classes and sessions conducted by the IAC project, the increased ability to concentrate on school work as a result of fewer worries and problems, the safer environment, and the treatment and assistance students were receiving for non-educational issues. Members of the school staff in particular, linked their comments about student learning with IAC activities. Student achievement was discussed with reference to standardized test results, general observations, increased time on task, fewer classroom disruptions, and students who seemed to be less stressed and more motivated.

Sample Comments:

they have that tutoring group, and that helps you out. . . . my friend L's in it, and she says it's really helping her with her marks. . . . it helps in some subjects

aren't worrying about whatever, problems . . . and they get their marks up

if kids are feeling better, they get better marks and stuff

my marks went right back up . . . and I've noticed that a lot of students are like that

he's able to cope with the work, the level he's at, he's making progress, his marks are going up all the time . . . there's been a big turnaround

time on task was increased. . . . could focus on teaching and learning

when you feel safe and you feel comfortable, of course you're going to achieve better

we went up a little more because kids were taught . . . nothing wrong with them and they could worry about their classes and work

testing results, and . . . looking at . . . report cards . . . effort's gone up too

> results . . . were up in all four core subject areas. Two . . . had doubled. Two . . . had increased rather substantially.
>
> it's helped deal with the baggage that stops them from being successful academically
>
> paid off in terms of the one year, dramatic change in achievement results
>
> Those kids [Grade 9 "Academic Stream"] are going ahead faster--the way that they're engaging in work is more sophisticated. Kids making more independent decisions, work quality is up--the expectations for work quality is higher
>
> [parent] says that [son's] life has changed. . . . academically. . . . he's getting better marks
>
> computer assisted learning . . . upgrade . . . reading, writing and math skills
>
> instead of kids being preoccupied with problems. . . . kids can come to school and concentrate on their school work. . . . that's why you see the . . . marks going up

Attitudes

Respondents cited increased awareness gained from information sessions, project activities, advice and assistance from team members, and everyday interaction with peers and agency staff as contributing to improved student attitudes. Students spoke glowingly of the support provided by agency staff, and of their feelings of increased confidence and trust gained from their interaction with agency staff. These comments were often made in the context of improved situations for students in the home, the school, and the community. Reference to increased confidence, self-esteem, and motivation characterized much of the conversation about student attitudes.

Sample Comments:

> if you talk about it in the Project A group . . . it really helps, like, bring racism and violence to our attention so that if we have a discussion about it in class, I know what I'm talking about
>
> I went to the Project B, and I felt better afterwards . . . happier and stuff, like free. . . . I wouldn't have to worry about anything now
>
> they're just trying to bring up self-esteem . . . marks and attitude adjustments--stuff like that
>
> they slowly bring up your self-esteem, and you feel better about yourself and once you feel better about yourself everything else seems to just go up
>
> a lot of kids, I've noticed, are happier and feel better about themselves

> if her marks are slipping, and she goes in and laughs . . . they say well, this is not acceptable
>
> helped attitudes towards the school. . . . big time, attitudes, feelings of safety
>
> they do accept people, they seem to accept kids who are different
>
> they look . . . happier, and if you ask them if things are okay, did you get to talk to someone, they say, oh yeah. . . . you know, they have a different look on their face, a relieved look
>
> no student has ever got cranky . . . I haven't heard . . . negative comments. . . . you know how kids say, it sucks big time. . . . they don't say that. . . . very positive about it
>
> student attitude results were--incredible. . . . the first question was an increase of 42%--kids feeling safe in their school. . . . phenomenal change in attitude
>
> found out they weren't stupid, and they also found out they were worth caring about
>
> students have grown in self-esteem, problem solving . . . reflected in fewer problems, better grades, positive outlook, more friendships

The remaining comments that were related to improved student outcomes are classified into the following sub-categories: (a) attendance, (b) behaviour, (c) citizenship, (d) participation, (e) relationships, (f) responsibility, and (g) strategies. Respondents commented that the IAC project in their school has a positive influence in these areas as well. The anomaly was attendance. Although positive comments about the impact of the IAC on attendance were reported by several respondents, one student at School A suggested that the IAC project did not have an impact on attendance. One school staff member at School B indicated that Project B helped improve attendance, but that there was a group of students who were not attending regularly, and she wondered if it was 'just a blip in the pattern'. Her comments are viewed in the context of a seven percent increase (89% to 96%) from the 1992-93 to 1993-94 school year. She was the only one of the fourteen people interviewed at School B who provided this information.

Sample Comments:

Attendance

it might help improve attendance

attendance or punctuality . . . meeting the class on time, with homework

I don't know if it's just a blip in the pattern . . . some kids that are just chronic non-attenders

kids are more attentive, kids are there, kids are feeling safe

it's helped attendance

Behaviour

behaviours have changed . . . can talk to anybody . . . don't have to be a really popular person

kids are demonstrating positive behaviours

had a lot of compliments on how well the students behaved

much better student behaviour. . . . less problems with the teacher

behaviour changes with their attitudes

Citizenship

helps a lot . . . if you're a good citizen, good things will come to you . . . Project A helps

to help childrens' hospitals. . . . we just do a lot of things for our community [Project B]

they need fund raisers. . . . always a lot of kids that will help . . . because they like the program

she's good one on one with the students. . . . she's actually done a lot of work for Project B

we have the positive heroes group that the kids emulate

Participation

more involved in the school. . . . they've got all these things you can do

session each month . . . guest speakers . . . videos. . . . really neat actually

my kids use it a lot. . . . every Thursday, and enjoy themselves

we've got these programs coming . . . basketball courts . . . kids are excited

I think so. . . . like in grades 7 and 8 . . . I just sat around

Relationships

grade nines are generally not supposed to associate with people in the other grades, and I do, like everyone else does. . . . it's not a big thing anymore

learning . . . not hard to be sociable . . . some of these kids are really, really shy . . . teaching them it's not hard to approach a group and start talking to them

like friends supporting friends. . . . it's more than ever . . . because we've opened our eyes. . . . made a lot of friends through Project B

was a loner. . . . that's turning around . . . got some friends, different kids

relating better to other kids, kids they don't know

Responsibility

if a person is totally irresponsible, and is sort of referred there, then I think they'll help them

a lot of the kids feel quite responsible for their school and for each other

more positive. . . . more a sense that he's in control

Project B. . . . a lot to do with improving. . . . responsibility

better decisions about managing his behaviour . . . better decisions at home . . . more responsible

Strategies

there's a lot of people . . . I've taken . . . into Project B . . . talked to them in there . . . dealt with my own problems

able to handle . . . problems . . . better . . . settling down in their classes

able to problem solve on her own now. . . . she owned up to it, and chose her own consequences and followed through on them

helping kids get better at using strategies for their behaviour

follow through more appropriately with friends

we notice the difference in how people are dealing with their problems

Gives them some tools to help themselves

some skill building and that kind of stuff

Data from the other six sub-categories -reduction in problems such as violence and substance abuse, safer environment, fewer home problems, greater access to improved services, and observed changes among students--represented 32% of the comments related to benefits to students. These comments are included here since they were often made in conjunction with statements about improved student outcomes.

Sample Comments:

Reduction in Problems

it keeps the fighting down in the school

there's a lot less fights . . . a lot less students in the office . . . a lot less violence

14 months I've been here we've had one altercation [Project A]

stops some kids from pregnancy and STDs and being active in drugs and alcohol, and garbage that keeps them from being successful kids

instead of kids being preoccupied with problems

the number of assaults, threats, vandalism, thefts, has decreased

Safer Environment

people are a lot calmer, things have toned down quite a bit. . . . just altogether better

more safe, there's a more secure feeling rather than a fighting feeling

we have safer kids

instead of pounding somebody's face . . . calmed down enough to go back to class

Kids feel safer in their community

a safer school than it was at one time

the second or third day the child welfare worker and L were trying to find her a place to live, trying to make sure she was safe

When they're in school now, we offer a safe environment

Fewer Home Problems

I've talked to [agency staff] and [agency staff] a couple of times about some of the problems I've had at home, or whatever. . . . helped a lot of the students. . . . with problems at home

if you're being. . . . abused at home . . . it's hard. . . . they help them understand that it's okay. . . . to tell, and . . .to feel sorry . . . but it's not okay to be sorry if it's not your fault

in the best interest of the child she was pulled

issues being addressed in the homes and in the school that are enabling they took me out of a place where I was not safe

made a lot of families better

Access to Services

the accessibility for the kids to get in . . . if they need help, it's right there

it opens the door. . . . if the kids have a problem and they can't talk to their parents, they need to go somewhere and talk to somebody

tremendous service. . . . have access to people who know us . . . respond quickly . . . are interested . . . know the kids . . . families

getting into [hospital], they are getting into [psychiatric] treatment program. . . . Child Welfare is going into the home . . . bringing in support

we are more readily getting treatment for kids that are seriously ill

I can have that investigated immediately. . . . it's taken care of effectively and well, immediately

the space in that room, is accessible for kids. . . . they can develop a sense of comfort with adults that are in helping roles

Positive Changes

It's changed the school and the students a lot

if you can get help for a kid, and the kid changes as my son has this year . . . Wow. . . . we were looking at going into the judicial system with my kid, I mean there's no doubt about it

she's matured a lot in the last year and a half. . . . she wants to be a social worker now

we have a strong group of kids now at the school

a change . . . they are aspiring to do other things . . . more for themselves

[student] went into 9-3, and [parent] says that his life has changed

he was a really neat kid in class and--a marked change

School District Evaluation Information

The following information, which was provided by school district administration, compares the results obtained at School B during the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years.

Student Achievement

According to district achievement tests, students at School B showed improvements in the percentage of students who met the grade nine benchmark in 1992-93 compared to 1993-94 in language arts (36% to 75%), mathematics (19% to 31%), science (8% to 17%), and social studies (27% to 30%).

Student Attendance

Student attendance increased from 89% in 1992-93 to 96% in 1993-94.

Student Attitudes

Responses on the 1993-94 Student Attitude Survey showed an increase in the percentage of positive responses to 34 of 35 survey questions compared to the 1992-93 school year. Increases of 32% to 45% were noted in survey questions related to (a) personal safety in the school and the community, (b) behaviour of other students in and out of class, (c) handling of student discipline, and (d) satisfaction with the principal.

Student Enrolment

Student enrolment increased from 220 students in 1992-93 to 260 students in 1993-94. It was reported that parents expressed interest in enrolling their child in School B because of the services available through Project B.

Staff Attitudes

Responses on the 1993-94 Staff Attitude Survey showed an increase in the percentage of positive responses to 30 of 45 survey questions compared to the 1992-93 school year. Increases of 12% to 50% were noted in survey questions related to (a) involvement of the non-parent community; (b) students receiving sufficient information about what they are expected to learn, what they have learned, and how they are expected to behave; (c) parents receiving sufficient information about what their children are expected to learn, what their children have learned, and how their children are expected to behave; and (d) good communication in the school, fair and reasonable assigned work responsibilities, and effective leadership of the principal.

Benefits to Parents

The distribution of comments citing benefits to parents reported by each group of respondents was, students: 11%, parents: 35%, school staff: 34%, and agency staff: 19%. The interview data for this sub-category was further classified into four categories: (a) increased knowledge and skills as indicated by comments that referred to a better understanding of childrens' needs, non-educational services, and addressing issues in the home--32%; (b) improved access to services--27%; (c) improved attitudes as reflected by comments about increased confidence, self-esteem, greater hope, feelings of support and relief--22%; and (d) increased opportunity for involvement as shown by comments citing examples of involvement, both for self, and in service to others--20%. Although some comments referred to inadequate parent involvement (see Challenges--Parents), several respondents indicated that parents who needed the services offered by agency staff, could obtain them without difficulty.

Sample Comments:

Knowledge and Skills

He said, well c'mon, you have to do this yourself. . . . [Mom] did it all by herself . . . she felt really good about it. . . . it does benefit the parents a lot too

even though I found out that he wasn't really attention deficit

gave me books to read, which I did

weren't too sure where to send anybody . . . as well as the people who are in crisis. . . . it's been good

can phone and say . . . my concerns, what can I do with them, or where can I go. . . . They provide information to the parents

some parents are getting training on how to be good parents

better understanding of their kids, kids needs, how to deal with them

more aware of what their children are going through

give them the ability to take charge of their own recovery

Improved Access to Services

I did go through the [psychiatric treatment program], they sent one of their workers here and I was there in a week and a half, and I had waited three years

worry for three years . . . my kid is driving everybody crazy. . . . takes forever on your own. . . . [school staff] one day . . . said, use Project B and I did, and like a week and a half later we were in [see also, Nature, Unique or Different Features]

don't have to search for these things

it was some place for these people to start. . . . been banging their heads against the wall . . . at least they were able to have the access here

these people right here right now, willing to help . . . able to help

the parents have benefited

I knew of a family . . . they were in hard times . . . I told [agency staff], and he checked it out and made sure they had a Christmas

Attitudes

it certainly changed my views, cause like I said, I never thought I would be in there, and now I've used them a couple of times

just so worthwhile, there's no price tag on it, it's invaluable. That's it!

given to some families is . . . self-esteem to get back to the world of work

a lot of parents that are happier with their students and happier with their school . . . and they're a lot happier at home

the problem is dealt with, that's got to be a relief to the parents

Increased Opportunities for Involvement

where we're trying to go with the group--is parents helping parents. . . . provide opportunities for parents to sit around the table . . . help from one another

there's a parent . . . who's interested in doing a parenting group herself

Parents can get more involved, they're more than welcome to be here

Project B has helped that [parent involvement] a bit

I'll talk with the parent, I'll complete an assessment, and develop a plan

Parents are involved in the work of the school more

Benefits to the School and School Staff

Individuals in all four respondent groups cited examples of benefits to the school and the school staff. Comments by the school staff represented 65% of the total comments related to this category. Comments by students, parents and agency staff comprised approximately 12% for each group. The comments were further classified into six sub-categories: (a) more time for teaching and for administration--29%; (b) overall school program benefits--19%; (c) access to coordinated, integrated services--19%; (d) attitudes, as reflected by comments about increased hope, confidence, feelings of support and satisfaction--16%; (e) more positive school and classroom climate as reflected by comments about fewer disruptions, behaviour problems and violence--9%; and (f) increased knowledge and skill, particularly in understanding student needs and in accommodating students with a variety of needs--8%.

Sample Comments:

More Time for Teaching and Administration

we had time as a staff to talk about . . . educational matters. . . . spend more time on teaching

a load off the teachers. . . . don't have to deal with all these little petty things. . . . taken a lot off administration, 'cause there's not always kids in here . . . in trouble

it gives them more class time and then the children benefit

other people to take care of that . . . focus on . . . teaching

freeing me, it's like a lifting for me, because I don't have to do that anymore

I can work hard to do other things--hey, like teach. . . . the kid rather than wrestle with him

working harder . . . smarter. . . . more time . . . to do what teachers are paid to do difference for us . . . in the administrative team is . . . we get to do our work. . . . visit classes . . . one on ones with teachers. . . . Meet with kids about school

introduced her to the child welfare worker . . . came back . . . to do minor things like, re-staff and re-timetable . . . had an unpredicted 30 kids

Overall School Program Benefits

a few programs that have been initiated that are really highly successful

to take advantage of that captive audience to involve kids in some of the programs that are being offered by, or some of the expertise that our interagency people have

topics that are not always appropriate to deal with in the classroom

now the parents come in for education things

opportunities to engage in activities that result in benefits

opening up to ideas about diet, abuse, and showing more respect for kids and families

tie in a recreational aspect with their tutoring program

Improved Access to Services

immediately . . . very important for us because we deal with high risk kids

timeliness of the service

access to all the services

timeliness is absolutely wonderful, the accessibility is absolutely. . . . those kind of things, being right here in the school

I just walk down the hall and say, [agency staff]--[student], [student]--[agency staff]. I'm outta here.

They'll send a referral our way, and we'll deal with it

Improved Attitudes

I don't have to worry about these things

the difference it's made is incredible. . . . staff attitude results were up

I think they feel maybe supported--that there's someone else out there

teachers, I think it calms them down a little bit too, 'cause all these kids who've got problems--usually they're the problem kids in the class

to have the team support is just phenomenal

they feel a lot better if . . . they're getting help that . . . they can't provide

More Positive School and Classroom Climate

a boost to the school's sort of overall atmosphere

there's more peace

staff members have more an opportunity to feel as if they're safe

it makes it easier on them [teachers], 'cause. . . . there's less fighting in the classes, and stuff like that. . . . much more calmer

a positive thing for the kids, and for the staff too

Increased Knowledge and Skill

we're also better able to identify who needs those services

the staff as a whole are now more aware of what services are available, and more conscious about bringing concerns forward

an opportunity to broaden her expertise . . . she can watch the experts

staff are gaining . . . expertise as well, by being involved in that process

I walk into my classroom with all of that knowledge . . . the kids we've discussed, the issues . . . I feel I have a real advantage

it helps in your teaching . . . it helps in your administrative work too

makes me a better teacher, and that's absolutely guaranteed

Benefits to the Agencies and Agency Staff

Approximately 9% of the comments related to benefits were classified into this category. Over 85% of the comments centred around the provision of timely and appropriate programming or intervention, the opportunities afforded the agency staff in getting to know the students and their needs, and the effective use of resources. A smaller number of comments referred to attitudes among agency staff, and to public awareness for the various agencies.

Sample Comments:

can maybe prevent some crises down the road by being here

better access to the needs

once you . . . experience the environment . . . allow for more possibilities

we can really capitalize on, and they can use our strengths, and so that's the piece about sharing resources, rather than just referring back and forth easier access to the students, and their families

I have more kids coming to me, giving me information

always a lot of kids that will help. . . . the kids do a lot of posters for them

a lot more skill levels

a lot more that I know about resources at west end that I didn't know

I have access to textbooks for kids, I have access to records

sharing expertise and resources

they get to know them better

they have a better understanding of schools and the reality of schools

now I know what they're like in school . . . how they're doing in school, and I get more information than just what they report themselves

able to get to know and interact with kids on personal level

for them [agency staff], it's the support they get from us [students]

they feel good because they're helping students . . . making things better

a place for comfort and . . . support. . . . they feel the same way, I mean if he has a problem you know, all of us are there you know, just to talk. And he'll sit there and tell us, you know, and we'll say, well why don't you do this, or how about you do that

there's a sense of seeing kids change . . . benefiting, and parents recognizing that as well

more attention to their particular agency. . . . perhaps they are used more

your agency . . . would be used more for what it should be used. . . . known to the public

I've developed a lot of relationships . . . which is irreplaceable

I'm better known

they feel the results of their work more immediately

a lot of information comes my way, to help me solve problems

Benefits, positive comments

A number of positive comments made by individuals in all four respondent groups are included here since they were generally made in the context of discussing the benefits of IAC. There were 36 comments classified in this category, and distributed among the four respondent groups as follows: (a) students--36%, (b) parents--22%, (c) school staff--36%, and (d) agency staff--6%.

Sample Comments:

a very popular program

It's a good team

All that I can say is that it's a good program

all I can say is, it's absolutely awesome. It's just--there's social workers, there's our policeman (oh, he's leaving us here--sob). . . .

I don't know. . . . I love it personally

what is really great about the project? everything!

If I haven't said I love it, then. . . . I love it!

it's something that I really value a lot. Like it's not something. . . . I don't know, it's just something that means a lot to me

people that know what it's about, they just love it

to me it was wonderful

I've seen what it's done to up. . . . .even if you don't use it . . . it's doing good for others

we have this wonderful service here

it's the whole picture--everybody benefits. . . . has to benefit from it.

haven't had any real failures in terms of what we've initiated

a really good program

it's not a stranger walking in, and that's been a wonderful difference

I like it very much. . . . working with those people

a great program

Guaranteed. I'm very happy with the program. Personally, professionally from a program, and from the aspect of the school. Absolutely unbelievable

going beyond what's expected

We can deal with them all

The Challenges

There were 209 comments classified as disadvantages or challenges, which represent 10% of the coded comments. Approximately 79% of these comments were made by school (44%) and agency (35%) staff members. Approximately 18% were made by parents, and 3% by students. The comments were further classified into two main categories: issues related to processes (54%), and issues pertaining to organizational matters (46%).

Processes

Comments related to processes were classified into four sub-categories according to issues concerning (a) people involvement, including students, parents, school and agency staff--27%; (b) time demands and constraints--11%; (c) complex issues such as confidentiality, planning, and service provision--10%; and (d) the difficulties in creating and maintaining awareness about the project, especially among parents--6%. Although a number of concerns were expressed, respondents were quick to convey--directly and indirectly--that the advantages and positive aspects far outweighed the challenges.

Sample Comments

Involvement of Students

> disadvantages . . . some people . . . once you bring it to their attention they don't do anything about it, like they don't care. . . . that really makes me mad, 'cause we're trying to do something, and then they put down our group when we're trying to help them learn that putdowns really hurt
>
> if you are getting beat by your parents, you wouldn't want to go talk to anybody. . . . if they make the wrong choice for you . . . could regret it
>
> sometimes she spends too much time there when she should be in class
>
> the only challenge that a student has is that, they have to go in there and say, well this is my problem, and they're embarrassed by it or they think it's their fault

Involvement of Parents

I don't think a lot of people . . . understand the program, or why it's here

spent a lot of time telling that family [son involved in shooting], we've got problems here, we've got to deal with these issues here. . . . Get out of our face, they kept saying

a lot of people only look to it when they're in crisis

They don't want to feel that their lives are in a goldfish bowl

parents may or may not like some of the decisions he has to make

all these people--with a lot more education than I have . . . that was somewhat intimidating

Project A folk have to adapt to whatever level that parent is at, in terms of their skills or abilities, or current crises

But those are the same people, who when they were kids, had such a sour taste about school, that you're not going to get them to come to school, 'cause they walk through those doors, and immediately they start chewing their fingernails. So it's a real difficult one, and even folks that didn't necessarily have major problems and are just kind of cruising along, it's like, no news is good news, everything's going along, isn't that great, they've got these things going. . . . don't know how to hook the parents back in

if you had a bad relationship with the school, and the one stop shopping kind of thing, there's only one door in, and there's no doors out. . . . get trapped in that circle of--the school has talked to the social worker, who has talked to the nurse, and you all share the same opinion about me now, and I have nowhere to go

Involvement of School Staff

really cautious in our approach . . . we've tried to introduce it in a manner that teachers will not feel that it is adding to their burden

almost been a resistance . . . maybe just an ignorance . . . teachers. . . . I don't know how whole heartedly--most . . . gave their attention to the Project A. . . . many of them that don't yet, but there are enough that do . . . there is good representation from School A in Project A

I run into conflict with the school because I see that and I see the kids not responding to the environment that they're in

going to take at least a year to even get teachers familiar

the teachers haven't been a lot involved in the process. . . . [teachers] feel more protective of the child's [class] time. . . . maybe there should be something structured in terms of us meeting. . . . there hasn't been a lot of. . . . workshops with the teachers

we're wanting to become seen more as partners . . . as extensions of the staff so that we're on an equal footing and that we're discussing the cases, and we're trying to find the best solutions . . . that's the second biggest challenge

I don't think we'll ever win over all the staff. . . . you find the ones that will make a difference--the one's who'll change. . . . some education for the school staff--in areas like family violence . . . issues the kids are growing up in that are affecting their school life, and helping them to see that there's more beyond just the school. . . . that's a challenge. . . . try and get schools to see that they're not just here for education

I'm not sure that all teachers are as informed, and as I'm not informed about what they all do. . . . I think there needs to be more cross training with us and the teachers

Involvement of Agency Staff

we get held back by . . . ones who are trying to get their heads around it

we've had difficulty with how she likes to define collaboration

there was one particular team member the first year who kept saying, everybody's got to be here the same amount of time . . . so a bit of around, through, or over top. . . . at the end of the first year when we lost a couple of team members we thought, that's it, we're going to blow apart. . . . yet the new team members who did come in, brought even more strengths

I don't want to tick the principal off, and all that old stuff comes back

aren't prepared to do their work differently. . . . some staff have been traditional . . . and that's the role they still want

can't come to the project wearing your hat--your professional hat

I think they felt that they [people on site the most] were carrying the whole load, and the rest of us were along for the ride

the need to define some rules for the kids that are in there

you can't be a saboteur. . . . if you are a part of the team, then you accept the team decision

Time Demands and Constraints

from a school administrator point of view . . . it's very time consuming

a lot of tour groups . . . that's disruptive too in a way

more attention and more demands on your time

the demands for their time is greater

twice as busy as I ever was before

takes a lot of up front time to connect

time--I've heard before that collaboration is timely because of resources, but to me it almost takes more resources

the disadvantages--it just takes a lot of time

issue for us is time to plan

Complex Issues Such As Confidentiality, Planning, Service Provision

either we get rid of confidentiality . . . or there isn't . . . a partnership

it's harder to communicate. . . . easier for one person to just do it

one of the bosses of one of the agencies . . . saying, you can't identify children by their name when you talk about them at this table

I know that I need to talk to [agency staff] a certain way to get things done. . . . to the [hospital] a certain different way to get things done, and on and on it goes. . . . so there's that tolerance for . . . . ambiguity is the best word that I can think of now

some of the shape of that needs to evolve out of ethics . . . issues like privacy, confidentiality, and other parts of it need to evolve around community ownership. . . . complicated

no model to follow really, so we are just learning as we go

we were busy doing it, and that created some advantages for us at the same time . . . because we realized quickly that confidentiality was a non-issue. . . . yet the team struggled with that for most of the first year

we were so busy, we were dancing as fast as we could in year one, that we didn't set aside time to pound out things like a mission and a vision statement, and dialogue. . . . those things just grew out of the process. . . . I think, in retrospect, we should have set aside . . . probably a day per term, where the organization met as a whole, and that there was some facilitating

Creating Awareness

if it's going to remain as a program, we have to get the word out better

biggest barrier would be the misunderstanding . . . what it's all about

really have to have a lot more information on it, advertise what's here

more awareness . . . I think that that's probably for me, the big thing

a lot of people in the community who don't realize it exists, and I don't know how better we can get the word on the streets

they are equal partners in that respect, but there's just so many staff that you need to have communication--I don't think they know our role

communication with the staff. . . . one of the things . . . we didn't do a really good job at

otherwise you just sit here and don't know what is happening. . . . I didn't even know where the room was for five months

Organizational Matters

Comments were classified into four sub-categories: (a) control, ownership, bureaucratic problems, the school-based model, and the project's purposes--16%; (b) resources, including physical resources and the allocation of staff time and certain types of individuals for the project--14%; (c) mandates and staff supervision--9%; and (d) funding and authority for decision making--7%. Some respondents indicated that their comments referred to earlier phases of the project and no longer apply.

Sample Comments

Control, Ownership, Bureaucratic Problems, School-based Model

disadvantage I think is. . . . it isn't equal because there's a much larger teaching staff, and they feel they have ownership

one of the factors is the school year, and how it's laid out. . . . on school time. . . . disadvantage is, how do we keep the momentum going

there is a tendency of those people [school] to manage things. . . . shoot themselves in the foot . . . . they manage things so tightly

CUPE . . . ATA . . . if you're not any of the above, you're ostracized immediately, 'cause they are driving their own agenda

the downside of working on the site . . . school has a lot of control. . . . school year is a problem

I moved back to my centre where I could control all those factors

because Project A itself has had difficulty defining . . . their role

I find there's just a lot of slow down and get going periods, and its amazing how for a ten month year . . . your actual time is shortened. . . . so it's a very different cycle of planning

creative breaking of the rules is the way we get things done. . . . that tells me a bureaucracy needs some crumbling

that was a study in bureaucracy right there [getting secretary and phone]

they perceived it as the school being maybe too imposing, and that it was a school directed, not a community directed model

I think that [ownership and control] was an issue . . . not an issue in the beginning, it was an issue part way through the first year when . . . okay, we've got a hundred and some odd referrals in our face, and we can take a deep breath now, and so, what are we doing about referrals, how are we generating agendas for meetings, how often are we meeting, who is coordinating and facilitating the intake of kids and so on

Allocation of Resources--People

obvious one I guess I should mention is, people. . . . get the wrong person, and it's frustrating the single worst thing was the difficulty with one team member last year. . . . set us back a little bit. . . . part of the growing process too. . . . wasn't such a bad thing . . . because it got us [agency staff]

people resources were an issue in terms of getting the right people on the team. . . . took us a year, year and a half to get the right child welfare person on the team

Allocation of Resources--Staff Time

of course you can't stay more than an hour or two hours . . . at School B, what do you mean you're staying . . . six hours . . . putting in overtime. . . . never tells his boss about overtime anymore. . . . continues to work the overtime, and he doesn't get compensation for it. . . . going to work for a short time . . . not going to work long term

sometimes we haven't had that [commitment] from all the agencies

when people don't come regularly, you spend . . . . time playing catch up

barriers are, lack of commitment by some agencies, lack of time offered

had a heck of a time, as a school staff, trying to convince other team members that . . . isn't a need for a probation officer to sit here and twiddle their thumbs for five days in the interest of equitability of the whole team

issue of time allotment per person . . . because if we're truly collaborating, how can we have some . . . here a half day . . . and others here five days

need commitment from all agencies for staffing, etc.

Allocation of Resources--Physical

difficulty getting some basic equipment needs met. . . . creative solution making . . . figured out cost recovery later. . . . fax machine, phone system, photocopying. . . . our small price to pay for all this interagency work [see also, Nature, Funding and Resources]

getting phone lines in, and desks, and all that kind of thing

Mandates and Staff Supervision

you can't say, sorry, that's not in my job description

understanding everybody else's role . . . job . . . boundaries how many of them could we skip over . . . break and get forgiveness, which ones were sacrosanct . . . a tough nut in year one

there were issues of territory and turf

concern . . . the mandates . . . not always heading in the same direction. . . . that seems to have been resolved

issue that needed to be worked out . . . what role different people played you need to be able to let go of your boundaries and your mandates to make a successful collaborative team. . . . not everybody can do that

Boundaries were not an issue for team members. . . . people that the team members reported to, it was an issue, for them. . . . I believe that this team is helping those walls come down

takes school staff a long time to be able to connect and feel comfortable in letting go of some of their own boundaries and baggage

the organizations who's mandate was prevention really struggling with allocating time to their staff for half day meetings

figuring out . . . my role here . . . then I had other responsibilities . . . at work

know what people's boundaries are . . . what their mandates are . . . who's willing to give up their boundaries . . . who still wants to work the same

Funding and Authority for Decision Making

in today's world, it's hard for some agencies to provide

right now how much it costs to run, is one of the worst things

I think it is a very expensive project to run

we don't want to be setting up an organization here that is going to be driven by bucks that are a central focus to the program

would make . . . incredible difference . . . if teams . . . financially autonomous

advise them to aim towards autonomy as quickly as they can. . . . be self sufficient, to try and access your own funding

someone else is holding the purse, we are not truly making decisions

sometimes they have full day meetings, and I think how much is this costing. . . . not make a decision among the blessed things

phenomenal task getting [secretary], and we're going through it again right now, in terms of who's going to pay . . . can she work till . . . end of June?

when team members are saying, this is what makes sense to be done, here are the results. . . . let me do what I think needs to be done. . . . give me decision making power at the site

structure it so that the people at the front line . . . make . . . decisions

as much as those people [agency managers] are supposed to be decision makers, they still don't seem to have any authority to make a decision

we spent a year and a half figuring out how to pay for it. . . . ten thousand dollars later and a year and a half it was finally resolved

Chapter Five

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a summary of the study's purpose and method, an interpretation of the results, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research. A discussion of the five sub-problems provides a context for the interpretation of results.

The Purpose and Method

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the nature of IAC in a school setting, and its impact on schooling. This was accomplished through an analysis of perceptions of students, parents, school staff, and agency staff in two schools where IAC has been operating for two years. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four students, four parents, five school staff, and five agency staff members. Respondents were asked to describe their opinions regarding the reasons for establishing IAC in their school, the nature of the IAC project, the factors that contribute to its effectiveness, the benefits, and the challenges. Comments coded into these five major categories were analyzed and described. School district evaluation information pertaining to student achievement, attitudes, attendance, enrollment, and staff attitudes for one of the schools was obtained and compared to the comments coded into the benefits category.

Interpretation of Results

Sub-problem #1:

> What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the conditions in the school and community that provide the impetus for establishing IAC in the school?

Students and school staff members contributed 75% of the comments related to the impetus for embarking on IAC in the school. A central theme was the number, variety and severity of problems that students were facing in the home, the school, and the community. There was a perception that the likelihood of experiencing school success was beyond the grasp of many students, and respondents expressed feelings of helplessness and hopelessness in coping with the problems prior to the IAC project in their school. Parents and school staff members conveyed frustration with previous attempts to obtain non-educational services needed to deal with the varied social, health care, and legal issues. In one of the schools, the problems were so great in number and severity, that a needs assessment wasn't conducted. As one respondent put it, the issues *were in our face*. This school knew that students and families needed help with behaviour problems, family problems, police issues, health care issues, and mental health issues, among others. They knew that assistance was needed from specialists in the social services, justice, and health care fields to provide crisis intervention and preventive services. The IAC project team in this school included these specialists, as well as a youth worker from the YMCA whose mandate was preventive, and who provided a recreation and tutoring program. The other school identified needs through focus group sessions with representatives from all partners.

The perceptions of respondents support the information regarding the reasons for implementing IAC revealed by studies and reports examined in the review of the literature. These perceptions also indicate that deteriorating social conditions, diminishing resources, and the inadequacies of the traditional expert-driven service delivery system have contributed to the need for establishing IAC at the two schools.

Sub-problem #2:

> What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the unique features of the IAC project in their school; that is, what does it look like, and how is it different from the previous situation?

Comments about the philosophy and purposes, service delivery approaches, unique or different features, and organizational features were coded into this category. The majority of comments (70%) regarding the nature of the IAC project were provided by school and agency staff members. Interviews revealed some uncertainty among partners about the definition of IAC and the philosophy of the project. Although respondents in one school admitted that more time and attention could have been devoted to clarification of definitions and philosophy, there was clear agreement that service to students and their families through both preventive and case management approaches was the main purpose.

The school staff offered more than three times the number of comments about the unique or different features compared to the other respondent groups. Positive sentiments regarding the immediate access to quality services, and changes in the school environment and among students were described by individuals from all respondent groups. They spoke of the reduction of problems combined with the availability of crisis intervention as key features in restoring a safe school climate so that a focus on learning could prevail. Respondents reported many improvements in processes and outcomes in comparison to the previous situation. The message conveyed in several interviews suggested that the IAC had something to do with these improvements.

The discussion about organizational matters focused on the advantages of locating the IAC team in the school. Respondents generally indicated support for the school-based model, although some concerns were expressed. These and other organizational concerns which pertain more to administrative matters are discussed in the section on challenges. Ownership and control issues were mentioned, with respondents suggesting that an individual or agency should not dominate. This supports Chaskin and Richman's (1992) caution that the school has a tendency to "control or dominate" (p. 108), and Gardiner's claim that "no one should 'own' the process" (p 85). One respondent indicated that the principal had to walk a fine line between being *in control of what comes down in this building* and working collaboratively. It was suggested that this was not a problem since *the collaboration and communication has been really up front.* Agency respondents all indicated that boundary spanning was necessary and accepted by the present IAC team. They reported few problems with issues about control, mandates, resources, and staff supervision, and seemed to be willing and able to overcome any challenges that confronted them in order to help students and families.

Sub-problem #3:

> What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the critical factors that contribute to the effectiveness of IAC in their school?

When asked to respond to the question, what makes the IAC project work well in this school, respondents spoke most fervently of the qualities and actions of the agency people. Comments indicated that the characteristics and type of involvement by students, parents, and school staff members were secondary to the characteristics and type of involvement of the agency members. The characteristics and actions of agency staff was reported as a critical factor in the effectiveness of the IAC, but this wasn't the case for other partners. The ability of agency team members to establish positive and effective working relations with other partners appeared to contribute to the enthusiasm and involvement that other partners, especially students, showed for the work of the IAC.

Respondents suggested that, regardless of the conditions or situations that students and families were experiencing, the IAC team could adjust their thinking and adapt their intervention strategies to meet the specific needs. One agency staff respondent suggested that the *underlying values . . . [were] to involve . . . students,* *staff . . . parents . . . at each step so that they'll be involved in the process.* These particular IAC team members expressed a willingness and ability to deal with any situation presented by students, parents, and school staff members. Their optimism seemed to be contagious. Feelings of confidence in tackling problems were translated into hope that students and families could, as one school staff member reported, *get themselves out of . . . the muck and despair . . . take charge of their own recovery.* This confidence and optimism was reflected by one of the agency staff members who suggested that, *we can deal with them all.*

Other themes regarding factors that make it work included teamwork and leadership. Agency staff members discussed teamwork more than individuals from the other groups. Open communication and joint planning and programming were emphasized. They admitted to some initial struggles with mandate issues, but indicated that all partners were showing greater commitment to *letting go of the boundaries.* Team members indicated that respect for specific expertise was shown, but that they were comfortable in spanning boundaries somewhat in order to provide immediate intervention. Several respondents referred to the strong support from the principals, although shared leadership was identified as the preferred mode for guiding the collaborative work. Rotating the chairperson for IAC team meetings was being pursued in one of the schools while the other school had a project coordinator funded through one of the external agencies who facilitated the work of the collaborative. There seemed to be less concern about leadership and control with the project in this school, and there was an indication that both schools approached leadership as being within the scope of all partners, including students.

Sub-problem #4:

> What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the benefits of school-based IAC, particularly in terms of student outcomes?

There were more than three times the number of comments classified as benefits to students compared to the number for the other three groups. Many comments about benefits to students and school staff were cited. Improvements in student learning, attitudes, behaviour, and social interactions were reported. Classes were said to be more focused and relaxed, allowing teaching and learning to take place. There were reports that students and families who required intervention for mental health, social, and legal issues were now receiving assistance that enabled students to participate more effectively in school. Respondents indicated that fewer problems and the accessibility of non-educational intervention to deal with crises helped to promote a calmer, safer atmosphere in the school, the home, and the community. School staff respondents spoke of overall school benefits due to the presence of agency staff, and to program enhancements realized through the various activities and groups that were conducted by these additional resource people.

Several respondents in School B reported that the unexpected gains in student achievement, attitudes, attendance, and enrollment, and the improved staff attitudes, could not be dismissed as being coincidental to the IAC project in their school. As one school staff respondent suggested, *I couldn't say to you, 14 students increased in achievement because of the [IAC]. I could tell you feeling-wise, and I could tell you visually, and I could tell you sort of atmospherically that that's happened. Without question in my mind, but I couldn't prove it.*

Improved accessibility to non-educational services was a major theme benefit, with parents and school staff expressing strong satisfaction for the immediacy of high quality, coordinated services. Agency staff referred to an improved ability on their part to provide those services through the IAC project. They cited examples of increased knowledge of student needs and greater flexibility in service provision. Improved attitudes, knowledge, and skills were also cited by parents and school staff respondents, one of whom reported that, *when I walk into my classroom with all of that knowledge . . . the kids we've discussed, the issues . . . I feel I have a real advantage.*

Sub-problem #5:

> What do students, parents, school and agency staff think are the challenges or disadvantages in operating a school-based IAC project?

When asked to describe challenges, frustrations, disappointments, or disadvantages, several respondents said that they couldn't think of any. Some respondents reported that a few students had been using the IAC as an excuse to miss class while spending time in the IAC room. This problem was recognized, by students as well, and was reported as being resolved. Parents provided most of the comments suggesting the need to communicate more information to the community, and explore ways to *hook the parents back in.*

Although the two schools were seen as supportive, there was some concern, expressed mainly by agency respondents, that teachers weren't fully informed and involved. As described earlier, respondents indicated that the involvement of school staff played a less important role in the effectiveness of the project than did the involvement of agency staff.

The nature of the work, and having to deal with a variety of personnel from different agencies caused some challenges, mostly for school and agency staff. Other issues included items such as, time demands and constraints, the need at times to communicate with several people, and differing views regarding confidentiality. These were not reported as major problems, and there was a sense that, except for time demands, these issues were becoming less bothersome with experience.

The comments dealing with organizational features were provided primarily by parents and agency staff. These had to do with issues of control and ownership, the school-based model, resources, mandates, funding and decision making authority. The message was that these were annoying for some people, but they were not viewed as major problems. The policies and procedures of the school and school system were identified as creating restrictions for some agency staff in carrying out their work. One agency staff respondent reported that *the downside of working on the site . . . school has a lot of control . . . school year is a problem.* This individual also reported frustrations caused by differing perceptions between school and agency staff regarding approaches used in dealing with specific issues with students.

The need for a clear definition of interagency collaboration that is shared by all partners, and how this definition is translated into practice, was also raised. Concerns about roles and responsibilities were not reported to be a major problem for team members, but some discussion was required before the team felt comfortable with their understanding about the various roles.

Some of the issues concerning control, mandates, and staff allocations were described by respondents as having dissipated over time. Four respondents expressed frustration with the decision making process for accessing support staff, equipment, and furniture. They felt that the need to obtain approval from the various agencies was time consuming and ineffective in reaching the best decisions for the project and partners. If left unaddressed, this issue could affect staff morale and impede progress of the IAC project. An even greater negative consequence, termination of the project, was cited by Byles (1985) for the very reason that project members were not given decision making authority to implement plans they had made.

Conclusions

Based on the data found in this study, the following conclusions about the nature of school-based IAC, and its potential impact on students and other partners are suggested.

1. The conditions existing in a school and community which create a need for embarking on an IAC project are unique, but can be attributed broadly to deteriorating social conditions, diminishing resources, and the inadequacies of existing service delivery systems. In establishing an IAC project, the match between these conditions and the makeup of the IAC team needs to be considered.

2. School success for many students is unlikely if serious social, emotional, and health needs go unaddressed. A school-based IAC project can address the needs of students and their families. The family is integral since school success for students can be influenced by conditions in the home.

3. An effective IAC project includes students, parents, and school staff in developing the philosophy, the purposes, service delivery approaches, and implementation strategies. Both crisis management and preventive services are needed. The balance between these two will depend on the needs of students and families.

4. Staff from different agencies can work together with a common mission such as providing services to students and families. The understanding that partners have about the definition of the IAC, its purposes, goals, and implementation develops over time and through experiencing the IAC process. Developing a shared understanding of these matters can be facilitated through forums such as inservices, or informally through experience. One of the schools in this study demonstrated that ongoing discussion in an open, positive, and flexible atmosphere helped partners reach

a shared understanding of the philosophy and purpose of their project without formal inservices. The primary purpose was pursued by working together, getting the students involved, and doing what was necessary to help students and families in need, immediately. Both schools in this study reported an initial commitment to these basic tenets, and worked out other operational matters as they went along. As one respondent put it, *we've maybe groped . . . there's no road map, there's no format to follow . . . as a result, our growth and development has been slow. . . . We are on . . . track . . . programs . . . that are really highly successful. . . . haven't had any failures . . . and what there is now is excitement for the future, and what is exciting is that we've got people who are committed.*

5. Students develop enthusiasm and commitment when they are involved in identifying issues that concern them, and plans to address these issues. The meaningful involvement of students cannot be understated as this seemed to be a key factor in the success of the two projects. Students were a powerful force, both for their own individual development and for the development of the IAC project in general.

6. The qualities of agency staff and the nature of their involvement is a key factor in the effectiveness of the IAC project. These individuals must be willing and able to work in a collaborative model where flexibility, boundary spanning and other aspects of teamwork such as open communication, trust, support, joint planning and programming are accepted and practiced. Agency staff also have expertise that can serve as a valuable resource to the school program. It may be reasonable, based on comments from respondents in this study, to suggest that the qualities of agency people and the nature of their involvement, represent the primary requirement for a successful IAC project. There was indication by many respondents that, *getting the right people* to serve as site team members is essential, and may even enable the team to operate effectively in spite of organizational and other challenges.

7. Benefits can accrue to all partners involved in a school-based IAC project. Many benefits are restricted to processes such as improved services and improved accessibility, although benefits in the area of outcomes for students and other partners were also noted in this study. Student success depends to some extent on the environment, which can be enhanced through an IAC project. Reduced problems through preventive measures, and crisis intervention can help to create a more relaxed, safer learning environment where students and teachers can focus on learning. As disabling problems and situations were reduced, as preventive and crisis intervention enabled more students to participate in schooling, and as the environment became more relaxed and focused, then, in the words of one key informant, *it's like this giant snowball rolling down hill now gathering up all this positive stuff.* The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of parents, school and agency staff can also be improved through an IAC project.

8. School and agency staff have different perspectives regarding child development and strategies for identifying and meeting needs. A number of school staff members may be committed to working in an integrated mode, even though, by virtue of their training and experience, they are more accustomed to working independently. Some teachers may find it difficult to function in a school with an IAC project. This is in contrast to the small number of agency staff in a school collaborative who have generally been selected because of their commitment and ability to work in this milieu. Traditional ways of schools and agencies can be a hindrance to operating an IAC project.

9. The effectiveness of an IAC project can be determined through a combination of outcome measures and perceptions of partners.

10. Locating the IAC project to the school has many advantages for all partners, but can also lead to challenges in areas such as ownership and control, time demands,

resources, and restrictions created by school and school district policies and procedures.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions, a number of recommendations may be warranted.

1. In considering to embark on an IAC project, a needs assessment is suggested in order to match the needs of students and families with specific services. A combination of surveys and focus groups could be used for this.

2. Agency managers are urged to assign team members who have demonstrated skill and a commitment for working in a multi-disciplinary milieu where a collaborative approach is used.

3. The project team consider the appointment of an IAC facilitator to facilitate the activities of the collaborative. Failing this, the project partners should agree to techniques such as rotating the chair for team meetings.

4. Inservices sessions focusing on the project's philosophy, goal-setting, and implementation strategies such as boundary spanning, communication, and case management should be provided for school staff and project team members. Strategies for involving students, parents, and other community members should also be pursued. Inservices sessions focusing on the impetus, nature, factors, potential benefits, and challenges should be provided for principals.

5. IAC project teams should identify indicators that can be used to provide a baseline for certain target areas pertinent to the IAC, and to measure outcomes in succeeding years.

6. Schools with IAC projects should consider using agency staff to assist with the development and implementation of certain aspects of school programming, for example in social studies, health, and for controversial issues such as personal safety and human sexuality.

7. Agency and school district administrators should consider adopting a site-based management model in which the IAC team is given resources and the authority to make decisions in deploying resources and conducting the operational aspects of its affairs. This may serve to further promote ownership, commitment, and efficient use of resources.

8. The experience of current IAC projects should be communicated to government officials involved in the fields of education, health care, justice, and social services. Information to these groups may serve to assist plans for pursuing IAC on a broader scale, and to complement current community-based initiatives in these service areas.

Regardless of the school or community population, partnerships between schools and human services agencies are recommended, not necessarily for every school, and not even necessarily located in the school. As the respondents in this study have suggested, even though only a small number of students and families may require crisis intervention, everyone can benefit from ready access to human services intervention that are coordinated and integrated with schooling. Programming aimed at the promotion of healthy, successful lifestyles is likely to occur through such partnerships. The opportunity for all partners to maximize their potential is more likely to be enhanced through such partnerships. This leads to a final recommendation, which has implications for the training of school and agency personnel. If a collaborative approach is to become more commonplace, then post-secondary institutions involved in the training of teachers and other human services personnel should ensure that curriculum and field experience aimed at developing skills, knowledge and attitudes in teamwork and collaboration are included in these programs.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. In-depth studies of any one of the topics covered in this study using specific conceptual models related to interagency work.
2. Causal-comparative studies using control groups to determine the effect of IAC on student learning in specific areas.
3. Studies comparing school-based models with community-based models.
4. Longitudinal studies to assess the long term impact of IAC on students, their families, school and agency staff.

This study has explored a phenomenon of current interest to those involved in education and other human services. An attempt has been made to describe the impetus, the key features, the benefits, and the challenges of IAC in two schools. Certainly the benefits referred to in this study may be attributed to other factors; however, the dramatic changes from 1992-93 to 1993-94 as reported by one school district's systematic monitoring system, coupled with the perceptions of the eighteen respondents, make it difficult to discount the positive impact of the IAC projects in these two schools.

Table 1
Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: All Categories

Category		Number of Comments per Group					
		Students	Parents	School	Agency	Total	%
The impetus		40	26	94	17	177	9
The factors		93	153	167	169	582	29
The nature		46	88	185	125	444	22
The benefits		123	130	228	109	590	29
The challenges		7	38	91	73	209	10
	Total:	309	435	765	493	2002	-
	%:	15	22	38	25	-	100

Table 2
Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: The Impetus

	Number of Comments per Group					
Sub-category	Students	Parents	School	Agency	Total	%
Student needs	3	1	29	5	38	21
Need for services	3	4	17	3	27	15
Family problems	6	8	8	3	25	14
School problems	6	5	10	2	23	13
Violence	8	0	10	0	18	10
Social-emotional problems	6	3	5	1	15	8
Reputation *	3	3	6	3	15	8
Substance abuse	4	1	3	0	8	5
Problems with the law	1	1	6	0	8	5
Total:	40	26	94	17	177	-
%:	23	15	53	10	-	100

Note. Several respondents who commented on school or community reputation, indicated that the 'bad' reputation was no longer warranted.

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: The Nature

Sub-category	Number of Comments per Group				Total	%
	Students	Parents	School	Agency		
Organizational features						
the school-based model	9	19	14	20	62	14
ownership and control	0	3	11	5	19	4
mandates, supervision	1	7	13	19	40	9
funding, resources	0	7	28	10	45	10
	10	36	66	54	166	37
Unique, or different	20	27	78	23	148	33
Philosophy and purposes	3	14	25	25	67	15
Service delivery approaches						
preventive	10	5	9	10	34	8
case management	1	1	5	4	11	2
general, or both	2	5	2	9	18	4
	13	11	16	23	63	14
Total:	46	88	185	125	444	-
%:	10	20	42	28	-	100

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: The Factors

	Number of Comments per Group					
Sub-category	Students	Parents	School	Agency	Total	%
Nature of involvement of:						
students	42	37	10	15	104	18
parents	6	44	15	6	71	12
school staff	1	2	11	10	24	4
agency staff	7	8	7	13	35	6
all partners	1	3	5	9	18	3
	57	94	48	53	252	43
Qualities or characteristics of:						
students	4	3	2	3	12	2
parents	4	3	11	4	22	4
school staff	2	9	10	6	27	5
agency staff	20	26	32	8	86	15
	30	41	55	21	147	25
Teamwork						
general	5	9	25	38	77	13
boundary spanning	0	3	6	32	41	7
flexibility	0	1	3	11	15	3
	5	13	34	81	133	23
Leadership	1	5	30	14	50	9
Total:	93	153	167	169	582	-
%:	16	26	29	29	-	100

Table 5

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: Benefits Sub-categories

Sub-category		Number of Comments per Group					
		Students	Parents	School	Agency	Total	%
Student benefits		84	67	115	49	315	53
Parent benefits		9	28	27	15	79	13
School staff benefits		12	13	68	11	104	18
Agency staff benefits		5	14	5	32	56	9
General benefits		13	8	13	2	36	6
	Total:	123	130	228	109	590	-
	%:	21	22	39	18	-	100

Table 6

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: Student Benefits

	Number of Comments per Group					
Sub-category	Students	Parents	School	Agency	Total	%
	STUDENT OUTCOMES					
Attitudes	24	13	26	8	71	23
Achievement, learning	11	14	20	14	59	19
Relationships	9	4	3	4	20	6
Strategies	3	3	10	3	19	6
Behaviour	2	4	4	2	12	4
Participation	5	2	5	0	12	4
Responsibility Level	2	3	4	1	10	3
Attendance	1	2	3	0	6	2
Citizenship	2	2	1	0	5	2
	59	47	76	32	214	68
	OTHER BENEFITS					
Access to services	7	8	11	3	29	9
Positive changes observed	1	4	11	7	23	7
Reduced problems	5	2	7	5	19	6
Safer environment	3	4	8	1	16	5
Family problems addressed	9	2	2	1	14	4
	25	20	39	17	101	32
Total:	84	67	115	49	315	-
%:	27	21	37	16	-	100

Table 7

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: Parent Benefits

Sub-category	Number of Comments per Group				Total	%
	Students	Parents	School	Agency		
Knowledge and skills	2	10	8	5	25	32
Access to services	2	9	6	4	21	27
Attitudes	3	6	6	2	17	22
Opportunities for involvement	2	3	7	4	16	20
Total:	9	28	27	15	79	-
%:	11	35	34	19	-	100

Table 8
Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: School Benefits

Sub-category	Number of Comments per Group				Total	%
	Students	Parents	School	Agency		
Time to teach	3	6	17	4	30	29
Overall school program	2	1	14	3	20	19
Access to services	1	3	14	2	20	19
Attitudes	3	0	13	1	17	16
School climate	3	2	3	1	9	9
Knowledge and skills	0	1	7	0	8	8
Total:	12	13	68	11	104	-
%:	12	12	65	11	-	100

Table 9

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: Agency Benefits

Sub-category	Number of Comments per Group				Total	%
	Students	Parents	School	Agency		
Provision of services	0	4	3	14	21	38
Knowledge of students, etc.	1	5	0	5	11	20
Use of resources	0	1	0	9	10	18
Attitudes	4	0	1	2	7	12
Public awareness	0	4	1	2	7	12
Total:	5	14	5	32	56	-
%:	9	25	9	57	-	100

Table 10
Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: Positive Comments

Sub-category		Number of Comments per Group				Total
		Students	Parents	School	Agency	
Positive comments		13	8	13	2	36
	%:	36	22	36	6	100

Table 11

Number and Percentage of Coded Comments: The Challenges

Sub-category	Number of Comments per Group				Total	%
	Students	Parents	School	Agency		
PROCESSES						
Nature of involvement of:						
students	6	1	1	0	8	4
parents	0	12	11	5	28	13
school staff	1	1	1	5	8	4
agency staff	0	1	4	8	13	6
	7	15	17	18	57	27
Time demands	0	0	11	11	22	11
Complex issues	0	2	12	6	20	10
Creating awareness	0	10	1	2	13	6
ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS						
Control and ownership, the bureaucracy, the model	0	5	13	16	34	16
Resources						
staff allocation-people	0	0	4	0	4	2
staff allocation-time	0	1	9	11	21	10
physical resources	0	0	3	1	4	2
	0	1	16	12	29	14
Mandates, supervision	0	4	8	7	19	9
Funding, decision-making	0	1	13	1	15	7
Total:	7	38	91	73	209	-
%:	3	18	44	35	-	100

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APPENDIX 1 Interview Schedule

A. Background information

1. Overview of the study - purpose, data collection, analysis procedures.
2. Importance of the interview data.
3. Confidentiality, right to opt out, preview transcript, copy to principal.

B. General questions about the IAC project at this school.

1. Why was there a need to establish IAC? How did it get initiated? Who did what?
2. What agencies are involved? What are their mandates?
3. How were management and policy makers (e.g., board, city, province) involved?
4. What is the overall purpose of the IAC project?
5. What is the philosophy and approach of the project?
6. What are the components of the project (types of services, programs, etc.)?
7. What fundamental issues needed to be resolved to make it work?
8. What processes are unique to this project?
9. What helps to make it work well? What's key? What makes communication work?
10. What are the advantages, benefits, outcomes (students, parents, school, agency)?
11. What are the disadvantages, challenges, barriers, frustrations, disappointments?
12. Are parents and kids really involved - meaningfully - or just peripherally?

C. Questions specific to the experience of the key informant.

1. What were you expecting from this project? Did it happen?
2. What advice would you give others about getting involved of starting a project?
3. What is your role with the project? How have you felt about it?
4. What do you feel is not so good about the project? What's the single worst thing?
5. What do you feel is great about the project. What's the single greatest thing?

E. Closure.

1. Is there anything that we haven't touched on that you'd like to add? (checklist)
2. Has anything happened recently that may have influenced your responses?
3. Thank you; your insights and specific information will be very helpful to the study.

APPENDIX 2 Sample Interview Transcript

NM Can you talk a little bit about its beginnings, how it got started, who was involved, why do it? Stuff like that.

SS2-B SS5-B was the ? here. She wanted to have some community involvement in our school. And like I was saying earlier, she's been here a few years - one year longer than I have - and she noticed there was a need at the beginning of her time her where she saw a lot of kids, specific kinds of kids coming to her with specific kinds of problems. And the community we live in - is not the best community, I mean there's not many resources down the street, compared to some places like downtown, or like Beverley for instance - there's all kinds of little organizations that you can go to. Here, there are none. You have to go somewhere, and it's a big effort to get there. And SS5-B saw a need in the school and in the community, because the school and the community here are together, and she saw this huge need from her own job, where kids would come to her with problems from home, kids would come to her with problems in school, and problems, you know we have a lot of kids who are foster kids who comes out of tons of group homes around here, a lot from the YYC, Edmonton Young Offenders Centre, are - this is our home school. Where we deal with a certain clientele, and that clientele became overwhelming for the teachers, overwhelming for the administration, and overwhelming for the kids and parents, because it was moving very slowly, and there wasn't a real, sort of, direct link between a problem and the resolution of that problem. And SS5-B presented that she wanted to have this done. She wanted to have this particular thing in School B. She works very hard at it. And when I say she works very hard at it, we all work very hard at it, but she is the driving force for it. This is her vision, this is her baby, and this is what she wants for her kids. And myself, being down in the office and in my classroom - it's been great for me. You know, and I've noticed a difference in the staff, I've noticed a difference in the kids, I've noticed a difference in the community.

NM So there were lots of needs in this community, and SS5-B happened to be the type of person who....

SS2-B Yeah, SS5-B's a bit of a go getter and a bit of a....she likes to be proactive rather than reactive. I mean, it's easy to react if someone's being abused at home, or easy to react if somebody has run away from home, or who is having trouble at home, or who is having trouble in the community, or having trouble in school. It's easy to react to that stuff, but it's a lot harder to be visionary and be proactive and preventive.

NM So is that part of the philosophy of the program, to be proactive? I know there's a lot - you mentioned there's a lot of need here, and so I assume there's a lot of crisis management, crisis intervention, case management. So I know there's a lot of that, but is part of the reason for the project also to do proactive stuff?

SS2-B I think that being proactive is very important. If you take the population of School B, and I don't know the statistics right off hand, but we have close to

300 kids (290 something) in our school, and to date we have seen - different kids, not different times - but we have seen about 140, or 160 of those 290. So well over half of the kids....

NM When you say you've seen, what do you mean?

SS2-B Project B, our program downstairs. Either social workers, policemen, probation officers - any of those - YMCA, nurses (LZ), any of those people.

NM So more than half....?

SS2-B I would say well over half. And I might be a little low on the statistics, but we're talking a fairly high proportion of people (involved?). As a matter of fact, before we came to this meeting, (9:00 am) there was a kid down there now, or waiting to see me, or waiting to see SS5-B, or waiting to see, you know, SS5-B had a - this kid was crying in SS5-B's room. He says, can I go down to Project B. Please go down there. Project B calls me or somebody, me because I do a bit of counseling and I do some peer support stuff. They phone me, now when I'm done here I'll go help that kid out. If Project B wasn't here, you and I wouldn't be having this meeting. You know, I mean that's one small example of how beneficial it is. Although there's no social worker down there now, there's no policeman or anybody else like that down there now, there's somebody there that he can go to that person, and that person can organize getting somebody right away.

NM So it's instant....

SS2-B It's instant (snaps fingers)....

NM ....is that a big plus for the thing?

SS2-B For me, for me personally (and like I was telling you yesterday about this staff) we all have our own perception of the need or the importance of an interagency program here on site. And, like I said, if you speak to the math teacher, she may have a different perception than I do. But I know from my little corner of the world looking out, it's been invaluable for me. And....you and I talked to SS3-B yesterday, and....it's been invaluable for us. We can immediately, and the immediate thing is very important for us, because we deal with high risk kids, and we've got - SS3-B's got 12 in his class, and I've got 8 or 10 in mine. In the school itself, we've got 27 behavior disorder kids. So there are several out in the regular community. We have several adapt kids, we have probably 40% of our population is special needs population. So....

NM So if you don't deal with those needs right away, what happens?

SS2-B They become, they fester, they become worse, and the problem that might be a minor problem with this kids downstairs and I might need just 5 minutes to talk to him - he might do something in the school, for instance. He may make a bad choice with some other kid in the school. So we deal with him now, we take care of him now. If I can't take care of it myself I leave a message with AS2-B, who is the social worker down there, or EI, or anybody - the policeman, or whoever it is, and immediately - (phone?). If I go talk to him within a half an hour, things will be solved. Whereas before, if a kid came to me and said I'm being beaten at home or I'm not having a good day at home - I'd be with the kid all day. Everything would stop. Everything that I would do would stop until that kid was taken care of - rightfully so. I mean that's the way it should be....

NM You have to deal with....

SS2-B ....the most important issue and get that dealt with, and all the rest is on hold. You know, and rightfully so. But I'm freed up now to do other things, in my classroom, in the school, or down in the office. We're all freed up for that kind of stuff. D or the math teacher, or somebody else may look at it a little differently.

NM So are you able to do more teaching, other things....?

SS2-B I'm able to be more things to more people, is I think the key there. I'm able to be freed up in my classroom, and if one of the kids goes crazy, or if one of the kids has a problem, I deal with him. That's why we have 2 teachers in there. I deal with him, and if I need to get rid of that kid, remove that kid, that's easily done. You know, and of course the administration and the school are very supportive of that. You know - they know that we have a tough job over there, and they know that we deal with certain kinds of kids, and we have to be flexible and we have to be creative, and proactive for certain. Much like the program (Project B) itself - they dovetail and mesh with each other.

NM So help me understand a little bit about the project itself, the components, the approach. I hear you use words like services, programs, proactive, all that. Could you fill me in on that a bit?

SS2-B Project B for us, has several components, and I'll just speak from my classroom as best I can.

NM Sure.

SS2-B My classroom - I deal with a lot of kids who have been in trouble with the law. Everyone of those kids in this school - not only in my classroom, but in School B - who have probation, community hours, or any of those kinds of things, the probation officer is here. Everyone of those kids - S is here, and when they have a probation appointment, they go down to Project B. They never miss a probation officer appointment because S is right here. They never miss community hours because - sometimes they're (the hours are done?) right here.

NM The probation officer is part of the team eh?

SS2-B That's part of the one team. That's one aspect of it. Social workers....uh, if a kid comes to me and says, I'm not being fed at home, and that's happened many time - I'm not being fed at home. I can phone AS2-B right away, I can phone EI right away, and I can have that investigated immediately. Whereas in the past I would have to phone downtown or to a district office and say, can I speak to an intake worker. It might be hours before I get a hold of somebody. Whereas now, within minutes - there's not question, it's minutes - to get a hold of somebody. And the problem is taken care of, not tomorrow, not the next day - immediately. And it's taken care of effectively and well, immediately. Uh, a policeman - if I have a crime that's happened in my classroom or in the school, I don't have to call K Station or L to have a policeman to come over here in 4 hours or get on a list. Whereas before I did. My first year teaching, we waited for a policeman for 4 hours at a time. We waited for a policeman with a kid in a time out room, holding him there for 4 hours. Whereas, now I call AS3-B....I call him at home!. He's got - I've got his home number. He's got a cellular phone. I say AS3-B, can you come in. He says I'll be in here in a minute.

(brief interruption - SS3-B)

SS2-B So, with the social worker and with the policeman - with AS3-B right there, it's a minute, it's 10 minutes, maximum it's a half an hour before I can have somebody there. And we've been dealing with crimes, and AS3-B is very realistic about things. He works with our kind of kids in our class very very well. And he's developed a relationship. He knows, they know even when he comes in without a uniform, they know that's AS3-B. They know when he's playing football with us, he's still AS3-B. He's a nice guy and he's a decent fellow, but he's still AS3-B. And if they have troubles, or if they have questions regarding the law, if they have questions about going court, if they need somebody to go to court with them, or (?) them, AS3-B is there for them. So that's another aspect of the thing. YMCA, there's a program there - Thursday nights where they have a fun night for the kids. There's a community aspect. The kids come from the community to School B, and people from the YMCA take care of that.

NM So a recreation....

SS2-B A recreational kind of thing. LZ the health nurse - if there's shots needed, if kids need immunization, or if....she's taken girls for pregnancy tests, or she talks about sex education and that kind of thing. It's like, it's right here. You know, we don't have to have big organized things, it's right here....

NM And they have the expertise eh? I mean, you have some, but they have....

SS3-B ....that's right, that's their area of specialty.

SS2-B ....exactly....

SS3-B A good example is....three years ago, (a student) he was (away from home?), he was living on the street, and it took me 3 days to get a social worker - his social worker, not any social worker, his own social worker, to apprehend him.

NM I remember those days when you might be working with 2 or 3 social workers for the same family, and it would take days to get anywhere.

SS3-B And another nice thing too is things like, with S - probation. The kids don't have to take the afternoon off school to go visit their probation officer.

SS2-B So those individual aspects are wonderful.

NM Yeah, so what would you call that - service provision by the agency - that's one component I guess.

SS2-B Yeah.

NM It's the immediate accessibility - so that component. What other components are there? You just started talking about ....

SS2-B The expertise, the expertise of the people that are there. I mean they're right there right away. The accessibility....the attachment to other community, or other agencies outside of the community. I mean with AS2-B, he knows the social services system a whole lot better than I do. I know it fairly well, SS3-B knows it fairly well. But you know what, he knows it way better than I do.

NM He knows that contacts, eh?

SS2-B He knows where he can go and where he can't go, what he can do and what he can't do. And I mean, lots of it depends on the individual in that particular part too. I mean if AS3-B wasn't AS3-B, I don't know what we'd do. I mean he's a fine person, a fine member of the team, a fine member of the school, and he's been accepted wonderfully.

SS3-B That's another aspect of it, I think too, the fact that we've got the same people here all the time. Like, child welfare workers can be pretty scary people, to a lot of kids. But the kids know AS2-B, and because they know him, if AS2-B has to intervene, it's not as scary, the trust is already there, when he intervenes....

SS2-B ....and with AS3-B, and with LZ, and with EI, all of those....

NM That's something I'm interested in too, what you're talking about. 'Cause a lot of stuff I've read and so on, they talk about the fact that a school-based model is usually preferred, although some of the people are saying that when its in the school, the school dominates so you should have it in the community. But, uh, what I hear you saying is, not only is it good to have the school-based model - they're here, they're on site, you get immediate access to them, but you said that if AS3-B wasn't AS3-B, it'd be different, so - talk a little bit about - and you mentioned AS2-B and EI - the people. How important is it that the people be a certain type?

SS2-B With the people that we know, I've never had one bit of grief with any of them, ever. I've never had them call me and - KN from GRH, we deal with GRH a lot. KN - she's up here and she checks on kids that are on (?) that she's seen before. The continuity from GRH - she doesn't have to come over here. She's here on Tuesdays or whenever she's here. She's (asks how different kids are doing?). So they keep the connection, and the kids keep seeing that person and the friendly face, and they get those kudos from....how they've done and somebody recognizes them....I don't think everybody would do that. I think it has to be a certain individual that has to have the same (devotion?) and the same vision, and the same proactive outlook of all the members of the team. And if you have some guy, or some woman who wasn't a team player, and didn't really have the same vision, or didn't really have the same drive or ambition or love for what they do, I think that would be detrimental to the team. But I have not seen any of that from, whether it's SS5-B, or from all the rest of them, from SS1-B, from us, from everybody. It's well received.

NM How did that happen? How did it happen that everybody seems to have the same vision and commitment and so on? How did that happen? Is it just because the kind of people they were, or did you have some training?

SS2-B I think that they were all interviewed for a particular position. They all wanted to be there. They all - it was a voluntary thing, I think. I think, first of all the individual person is a particular kind of person. Secondly I think that the leadership that is given to the Project B program - I may sound like a company man, but I don't mean to sound that way - but the leadership that's given to the Project B, and the drive and the ambition is contagious and infectious. And, with SS5-B, that's her vision. She does not want - she's sees it as an absolute necessity - for this program. Absolute necessity. And everybody else feels the same way, and she has the direction along with other people, and they all have say and all that stuff. But the leadership and guidance that's given....training, they're all trained, they're all trained in their field. AS2-B, EI, all of those people were trained in their field. They're good at what they do. Pardon me, they're very good at what they do.

NM Yeah, so there's that, but I also hear you saying that it's voluntary, and the people who are here are the kind of people who want to be in this environment.

SS2-B Make a difference. They want to make a difference.

NM Right, whereas some people are excellent in social work, or public health, or whatever, but they're not made, they're not best suited for working in a multi-disciplinary kind of team.

SS2-B Not team players. And I don't know the inner workings of the Project B program in that sense, and I don't, I have never heard of any bickering or fighting, or any of that stuff. I've never heard of any of that, and if it is happening, they hide it very very well. And I haven't heard of it. So I think that with the people that have been chosen, and the people who have chosen to be there, they're all very dedicated people. They're all very dedicated and directional and visionary for a certain thing. I mean, LZ for instance, the health nurse. She has a particular mandate. The school, SS5-B has a particular mandate. And I don't think, and I think the structure of that program, is that each one has an equal kind of say. I think that, although SS5-B, it's in her school, and although SS5-B runs it and is sort of the visionary, I think that if people don't like what she's doing or saying, or the direction, then they can say something. I'm hoping that's what's happening.

NM Yeah. That's my understanding.

SS2-B I think that's my understanding too....

NM ....it's a shared....

SS2-B ....so for instance, it's a ....no one person says look, no one person has veto. No one person says, no I don't like that. I think that as a community, communal kind of thing as best as it can be. And I've never heard of any instance, and if I did I've got my head in the sand. But I've never heard any bickering - maybe some minor little thing, but nothing major that would shake the foundation of the program ever.

SS3-B There has been some concern though that the school does dominate.

SS2-B Yeah. And that's one of your questions.

NM Talk about that for a sec. What's that all about.

SS3-B I think it was more a matter of looking....I think, I guess part of the problem is, the child welfare worker has his own, works for his own organization, has his own agenda and guidelines and role, and the city (?) social worker, and the probation officer, and the health nurse, and your bringing together how many - what is it, a dozen or whatever different agencies - each with their own agenda. And of course there's the school right sort of in the middle of it, and there's a lot of concern sometimes the mandates don't always, they're not always heading in the same direction.

NM Takes quite a bit I imagine, for the people to make it work....

SS3-B ....there was some concern, I think earlier - especially earlier in the year there was a concern, and that seems to have been resolved.

SS2-B Yeah, I think that's been resolved, and I think that (and I'm going to talk out of school here a little bit) - I think that SS5-B is a very, very forceful person when she gets a vision, and she, you know, this is her baby. This is her thing. And you know what, she's going to damn well make this thing work. And that's the type of per....and we talked earlier about personality - that's the type of personality, and I personally find that a wonderful quality. I don't know if everybody else finds that a wonderful quality. I think that if she feels that the school isn't being benefited, she'll say so. She'll say, I don't think this is good for the school. And that may offend people, that may set people aside, or that may make people thing: well hang on, maybe the school isn't a good place to have it. And that was one of your questions earlier, was - some people may think it might be better out in the community. I think for this - and you have to look at each one individually - for this particular program, it was designed, it was....in its conception it was specifically for the school. To get these organizations in the school to deal with in school problems, and later on in the community, and help out the community. But the basic thing, I think, the basic mandate was to help the kids in the school. Of course the kids in the community too, because they're the ones that come to our school. So I think there has been in the past some sort of overlapping of, or some stepping on somebody's toes, because - no, no, the child welfare department doesn't act that way, or the probation officer - no, no, the probation department doesn't work that way, or no, no, the city doesn't deal with it that way, no - the YMCA can't do that, no, the police don't normally get involved in this. So then there's some give and take. SS5-B has to give or take, and the rest of them have to, you know, everybody has to give too. And I think personally, I don't see a better place for it. For this program - than in the school. Without question.

NM So the benefits of having it in the school far outweigh the challenges of....

SS2-B ....leaps and bounds!

NM ....of having to work out these territorial turf issues?

SS2-B Leaps and bounds! Leaps and bounds!

NM Ok. SS3-B you were here before Project B came along, and you (SS2-B) came just as it was getting going.

SS2-B I was here one year. SS3-B was here many years.

NM So could you guys talk a little bit about, just briefly, the difference between what it was like before in meeting the needs of kids, the kind of kids you're dealing with, compared to now.

SS3-B I think, probably for the average student, (?) see very little difference. But we have got so many high risk kids here. For those kids I see, I think we see a real difference, (?) in that the services are there and available, and I think that the staff as a whole are now more aware of what services are available, and more conscious about bringing concerns forward. The timeliness of the service - the fact that you don't have to play telephone tag for a week to get a hold of a service provider, and then go through filling out the forms and ta-da-ta-da-ta-da-ta-da.

SS2-B Speaking of telephone tag, I have a message in to a social worker who doesn't work in this school here. She is outside of the school, and outside of the loop. Doesn't work with AS2-B, outside of the loop. I've got a message in, I spoke to her at 10 o'clock yesterday morning. She was supposed to get back to me by the end of the day yesterday for me to tell her how long this kid is going to be suspended for. We have to have a meeting. This kid is out of control, we have to have a meeting with this social worker. I didn't here from her yesterday, and I haven't heard from her as on now (10 am the next day). I'm going to have now go, I've got a note to myself to phone this lady. I leave a message - she's (out for the day again?). AS2-B, done! We have a meeting tomorrow morning - it's done.

NM Good example.

SS3-B (I....couldn't find one of my students....the social worker....?) nobody bothered to tell me. I found out from AS2-B.

SS2-B And that in fact has a real bearing on your program....

SS3-B ....on my kids. If, you know, it's nice to know that the child is no longer living at home, ...(noises)....

(brief interruption)

NM Do you need some time?

SS2-B No, no, I can deal with this later. Um, yeah, so with the incident I just told you about. I mean, I'll go downstairs and I'll chase her down and she'll have phoned me. Whereas, AS2-B is right here.

NM Is it at all possible that, I guess it isn't the way the social services system works, I was going to ask, couldn't all the kids who come to School B be under - or, there's too many, the caseload....

SS2-B I don't know the exact number NM, but I think that they can have like, 14.

NM Yeah.

SS2-B We've got 90 involved - to 160, or whatever it is, you know what I mean....not all of them are in child welfare. I don't know the exact statistic, but I would imagine there are well over 40, guessing, in child welfare - here. Guessing, well over. And that's too big a load. And so AS2-B is juggling and dancing as fast as AS2-B can dance. And I don't think, one of the other questions that might come up, I don't think that these problems would have been - we're not creating these, we're not looking for anything. These are things that are coming to us. And I don't think that are statistics are unnaturally high, given our demographics, and given where we live, and given the kind of kids we have. I think that we're just fortunate to be positive about, or to be lucky enough to have that program there. Without question.

NM So in comparing before to now, you mentioned accessibility, and....

SS2-B I was here one year before the program came, and then I was here - that second year I was here they were implementing the program, they were in the planning and the fundamental stages. I think they did a little planning the first year but we didn't hear a lot about it. The second year I was here, we heard a little bit more about it - this wonderful program that was going to come to School B, and help us out in our classroom, and I went - how the hell is that going to work. Like I really had no idea what it was all about the first year it was implemented. And that was for several reasons, one, particularly is, it was getting off the ground and there wasn't a whole lot of publicity, and there wasn't a whole lot of people getting around. So when it first came out it was like, this wonderful program that was going to help us out and I looked at SS3-B and said, what the hell is that. You know, I knew nothing about it. However, the second year, late that year, we started going, holy - wait a minute here - this is okay. Whether that was sort of it just got off the ground, or just sort of got rolling....

SS3-B But it took a long time to get all the resources in place....

SS2-B Yeah, it took a while....

SS3-B ....to even figure out what they could do, and couldn't do, and....

SS2-B Exactly, but after that, late that year, or for certain early that third year I was here - second year the program was in place, oh, it was great! Like that's this year isn't it?

SS3-B Yeah, it's the third year.

NM So even though it was something that was under the auspices of government and the school board and so on, and the departments of social....even though that was there, it really was, in one way it was grassroots was it. Because I hear you say the people came on and they built it?

SS3-B Yeah, I think, all the people involved are in support....

SS2-B Yeah, although it was sort of this big airy, fairy kind of flowery, kind of this is what we're going to do, it didn't end up that way. It was, and that's what I first remember it being: Alberta Social Services and child Welfare, and the Solicitor General, and health nurse, and all those....it'd be nice, but - gee that's an awful lot of resources.

NM More bureaucracy....

SS2-B ....and, like, holy smokes, how's that going to work, and how are we going to understand how that's going to work. And then we started meeting the people. And they were grass roots kind of people, they were, and you know, we started doing small things, and SO the probation officer....and it was like, yeah - 'cause I talked to her on the phone a thousand times - like, SO, your kid's not here today, you know. Whereas now, they're downstairs. So - it was wonderful, and it has been wonderful, and I hope it continues to be wonderful. But, you know, it's....like I said, the first year there wasn't any resources. And I remember times sitting in my time out room for 45 minutes, an hour and a half waiting for a policeman to come; 911 call, 911....45 minutes policemen are here - later; 911! So, figure that out.

NM I thought 911 was supposed to have a 7 minute response time....

SS2-B 45 minutes, 911!

NM Hm. Just so I don't lose it, summarize in a brief sentence, the differences between before and now, for me....

SS2-B Accessibility - there, timeliness - there, resources at your fingertips, results - right there, immediate ones.

NM Anything about the school climate? The culture, the....

SS2-B Yeah, like SS3-B said earlier, for the regular everyday kid that doesn't have too many problems, people don't notice a difference. But for those 40% of the kids who do have some sort of - ranging from 0 to 10 problems - they're going to notice a big difference. And we notice the difference in how people are dealing with their problems. Rather than being bad, violent, or angry, or acting out, they say I need to go speak to AS2-B, or I need to go speak to AS3-B, or I need to go speak to somebody. And it's right there....

NM So you see that in the kids even, too. They're thinking a little....?

SS2-B ....and again, this morning with SS5-B, the kid could have been miserable, rotten, and horrible. But said, can I go speak to somebody in Project B. Right of math class. The Project B people phone me.

NM So they have an avenue to vent other than (whack, whack, whack with hands)....

SS2-B Exactly, they have somebody there to catch them, and hold them there, and help them out.

NM ....help them work it through....

SS2-B ....work it through. And that person's not an administrator, not a principal. Sometimes it is, but not always....it's not a teacher....we have a front line sort of counseling thing in our school where the teacher is the first person a kid comes to. And that teacher makes a decision - can they deal with it here, or - hey you know what, maybe you want to go see AS2-B. And that's not sort of shirking any responsibility, that's knowing your limitations and saying, well I don't know, this looks like it might be - you better go see LZ, this looks like it might be a LZ thing.

NM So has there had to be some training for the teachers to get thinking that way, or....?

SS2-B I don't know if there's been any formal training....

NM ....talking about it at staff meetings?

SS2-B We do have staff meetings and Project B meetings are always on our agenda, and SS5-B always lets us know, or SS1-B lets us know what was said at the meeting. We have case conferences for each kid on every third Thursday where if we have a kid we're having a problem with we write it down, and that's taken to the Project B agenda. We have access to Project B - all we need to do is, we have a referral form - write it in there - it's done! So, no formal training in that sense, more along....familiarity with it. And that's happened in the second - late in the first, early in the second year of its being here.

NM Ok, that's good, I think you've given me some really good stuff on that - you know, comparing before and now, and you've added a whole bunch of other stuff too. If I asked you what process were unique to this project, do you think you've already answered that, or is there anything you would summarize briefly in saying, what's unique about Project B at School B?

SS2-B I mean, we've talked about the uniqueness of it, and I think partly it is - the group of people that are together, the willingness of everybody to be involved, including those particular people in Project B along with the other particular people in the school - we're all working together. The community sort of outreach program, the community feeling, the better well-being of students. We all have - lets take care of this problem here, and lets get on with teaching. And this problem is, this kid's hungry, or this kid's tired, or this kid's hurt - he's not, or she's not going to learn. So the uniqueness is that we're all here working together as a group, although the Project B team is the Project B team, and we're our team, but we do mesh together, we're like - kind of like a machine in the sense that we're intertwined. Not all the time, but most of the time. The timeliness is absolutely wonderful, the accessibility is absolutely....those kind of things, being right here in the school. I don't have to walk across the street to K Station. I don't have to get on the phone. I just have to go downstairs. I just have to go downstairs, and right to the room, and say, AS2-B can you come up and see me when you get a chance.

NM Yeah. You mentioned earlier that you don't know if there were some issues in the planning, or the Project B meetings that had to be worked out. Communication is a big thing, I would imagine, and when I think of a project like this I wonder, what are some of the fundamental issues that needed to be worked out, needed to be resolved in order to make it work?

SS2-B I think a big issue that needed to be worked out was, what role different people played. Where did LZ, fit in as the health nurse? Where does AS2-B fit in as the child welfare worker? Where did EI fit in, who is in social services but for the city - so there's two communities working there together. So, and where does AS3-B fit in, because he's a policeman on the street, and he's a policeman here; where does he fit in, in the whole scheme of things. And he and SO work real well together because she's a probation officer. They know. They work together, they're in the....you know. YMCA, what is their role? I think - lots of the thing is getting....the initial planning stages when people were coming in, the communication was, what do I do. Not I don't know what to do, but what is my role here at the school? Is my role the same as....And that would be I imagine, the biggest thing.

NM Was there any worry of stepping on one anothers toes, getting into one anothers domain; boundary spanning, role release....

SS2-B I wasn't active in that....SS1-B would know more about that than I would, and SS5- B certainly would. But I wasn't active in that sense, I was more stepping outside. But I would imagine, I mean I would guess and say, sure there was a lot of stepping on people's toes. But you know what, they're flexible people, they're resilient, they're like an expanding balloon and contracting, and okay, you know, I mean that's the way....

NM Yeah, yeah, yeah. Back to what you said earlier, it's the people. Have them school-based, have them here, but....

SS2-B ....if you had somebody in that, for instance if you had somebody in there that was a child welfare worker who said, this is the rule, this is the rule, and this is how it's going to be, and you don't come into my space, we'd be pretty difficult trying to go with that person. And that wouldn't work well with the rest of the ten or eleven or twelve other people.

NM Yeah. Excellent. Are there any....you've talked a lot about the advantages, the benefits. Are there any that you haven't mentioned? What about outcomes for students, we haven't talked about that specifically. Do you see the project having some impact on things like student attitudes, student achievement, attendance, behavior, citizenship, responsibility, all those things we try to build in kids, and try to help them build?

SS2-B Again, from my point of view in my classroom, we keep - as teachers, we keep very good contact with parents, or whoever the kid is living with, whoever the caregiver is. On occasion people don't have a phone. On occasion we can't get hold of somebody, on occasion the kid goes away to two or three days and we don't know what's happening. Immediately, I talk to AS2-B. I say AS2-B, we have an attendance problem. Can you take care of it? So it's....that's worked out that way.

NM It's helped with attendance?

SS2-B It's helped attendance really well. It's helped attitudes towards the school. I mean this school....I mean you talk in the district about schools you don't want to be at, School B is one on that list. There's 5 schools that no one wants to come to - School B is one of them. Our reputation certainly precedes us. And this school has had a horrible reputation in the last, I guess ten years.

Although let me qualify that, let me explain. However, coincidentally in the last four or five years, things have come a long, long way. Where people are saying, hey wait a minute here, School B's not all that bad. I know I say that. I wouldn't, I don't see myself working anywhere else. SS3-B doesn't see himself working anywhere else. We were eligible to transfer from this school, anywhere we wanted in the district. Put in a form, you could go where you want. How many people went? None. How many people put in a form - just to see? Four or five put 'em in, but nobody left. There's nothing better out there than here. You know. So we've got, I mean, we're a close knit bunch of people here. You know, all the teachers. We are very unique in our staff. You compare staff rooms, and you'll find how unique we really are. And that group of people that we work with, that I work with (here, we're used to it, 'cause up here we're close with the four of us) - but we're also very close outside (the classroom), like the staff room - we're all accepted for who we are. I'm personally very thankful for that, ...because....

NM ....you're such a weird guy....

SS2-b ....yeah, and they say I don't teach behavior disorders for nothing - they put me there for a reason....

NM So staff, that sounds like you're talking about staff morale....the project has had some role in boosting staff morale?

SS2-B Again, I speak from my own point of view. For me, the pressures - the added pressures of waiting for some (?) social worker to phone me, or waiting for this to happen, or me wrestling with a kid - na, na, na, na, na. I mean, I do those things. But I don't do that a lot anymore. Do you know what I mean? It's been freeing me, it's like a lifting for me, because I don't have to do that anymore.

NM So the benefit for the staff?

SS2-B So therefore I can be relaxed. I can look at things, and go, (?), and I can work hard to do other things - hey, like teach! Take a piece of chalk and write on the board. Sit down with a kid, teach the kid rather than wrestle with him. I can't remember the last time where I was physically holding a kid down looking at SS3-B, sweating - him and I - and saying, when are they coming, when are they coming. I don't remember that time. But I do remember it - since the program I don't remember doing that, before the program I certainly remember it.

NM Yeah. So benefits for the staff, big time, benefits for the students - you talked about attitudes, attendance, achievement....

SS2-B ....big time, attitudes, feelings of safety. Well when you feel safe and you feel comfortable, of course you're going to achieve better. All those things come together. If you're attending, you're eating, you're safe, you're comfortable....you're going to sit in your class and you're going to do stuff. You're not going to misbehave. So, without question, I mean those are things that are not tangible. I couldn't say to you, 14 students increased in achievement because of the program. I could tell you feeling wise, and I could tell you visually, and I could tell you sort of atmospheric ally that that's happened. Without question in my mind, but I couldn't prove it.

NM Yeah. What about study skills, organization, kids taking responsibility for their behavior, their learning?

SS2-B That's through, we do that through our home room activities We do that through Project B and there're sort of connected to one another. Homework - we have a homework policy here at School B, that every kid is expected to do an hour of homework everyday.

NM So comparing before to now, do you see any noticeable difference in....

SS2-B Well, if you look at the achievement results - you're probably going to get the achievement results....

NM Yeah, I'm going to look at them.

SS2-B And you'll be surprised at the achievement results, because, uh....often times people think that we get the worst of the worst here at School B, and....the way it was explained to me one time, was, there's a continuum in the district, in a sense. This being the best, this being the worst, and the middle of the road. Most of the schools in the district end up in this area (showing the middle). School B has a separate and individual sort of thing like that, and we end up here (showing the bottom). Most of our best kids are average. Like our brilliant kids here at School B are average.

NM You have your own little unique place on the continuum.

SS2-B Exactly. So here's the big continuum, and the smaller continuum here - where, we end up somewhere in that range. So when they talk about benchmark, some of our kids don't even reach benchmark, but if you look at our own scale for our own kids - given all that, you look at the results, and, language arts went down a little bit, because we had some.... L was sick. Our language arts teacher was sick. But you look at math - they're up. You look at social studies - they're up. You look at science - they're way up. From previous years. So when you're looking at this, you look at in two or three years from now. Or, from before - you look at what happened from 1991 to 1995, and I can guarantee you there's a big increase. For several reasons: one, teachers are working harder, teachers are working smarter; two, we've got access available, so we've got more time in the classroom to do what teachers are paid to do. Kids are feeling more comfortable....

NM Kids are feeling safer, feeling better, more time on task?

SS2-B ....no question....

NM I hear you say teachers are teaching more....

SS2-B ....teachers are teaching more, kids are more attentive, kids are there, kids are feeling - and the key word for me is, safe man. I mean, they've got to be safe - safe from themselves, safe from others, safe from community, safe from not eating, safe from all those things. And if you're feeling safe, I mean it goes back simple things - if you're not safe, you're going to take care of your basic needs, and basic needs are - you know - if they're feeling safe....I mean it's hard to teach a kid that's sitting there worried about whether he's going to be fed, or get the hell beat out of him when he gets home, or is there going to be somebody home. For example, I'll tell you another story. Last Friday....last Wednesday, a lady came in to me and said, my son hasn't been home for two days. He hadn't been home since Friday night - three or four days, whatever it was. I've go to Saskatchewan. This is Wednesday. I said, why are you going to Saskatchewan. She said, no this was Monday, she said, I'd like to leave today - Monday morning. I said, well, what are you going to do about your kid. She said, I left a note on the door. I left a note on the door I'm going to Saskatchewan. When are you going to be back? Oh, Friday or Saturday. So you're going to leave your kid for five days? Well I haven't seen him. I said, I don't think that's a good idea. Well, I don't have any choice. I said, if you're making that choice, I can't beat you up and make you stay. Give me the number where you'll be at, and I'll take care of it, I'll do what I have to do. I took that number, walked directly (good-bye), walked directly to AS2-B. AS2-B - he said, this is abandonment. So we're talking immediate - right then, right then. So here's this kid not feeling safe. How's this kid going to sit in his classroom, and learn, when mom and dad aren't home. You know. So there's another - I mean, I could give you more.

NM Yeah, that's a good example. I'm sure you could give me lots.

SS2-B Yep.

NM Ok, uh. I'm going to move us on here. What about parents? We've talked about benefits for the school and the students and the agency staff - better access to the kids. What about parents?

SS2-B And I can only think about what I would like as a parent. I mean, here we have struggling parents, single parents, not working, and whatever. A parent who's up to here with this rotten kid, feeling that they're drowning, feeling like nobody is listening, feeling like there's no hope, no - sort of respite for anything. And all of a sudden, somebody comes to them and says, you know what, we have this program here at School B junior high called Project B. And we have several organizations working together for the benefit of your kid. Would you like us to....and they go, yeah. You look at some parents and they say, wow. Nine out of ten parents will say, yeah, great idea. One will say....I don't think that's such a good idea cause nobody likes people looking into their back yard.

NM Yeah, stay out of my life.

SS2-B I'd say benefits for parents....the vast majority would say - thank you!

NM ....'cause many of them are scrambling to get help?

SS2-B ....calling social services, being put on hold, la-ta-da-da-da. Whatever, calling GRH - whatever. So they've got these people right here right now, willing to help, and they're able to help. And then they feel (...for a week?). They're not letting go of anything, but they feel helped, they feel empowered, I guess is a good word.

NM Yeah. Is one of the components of the project to help educate parents, help them to be better advocates for their kids, help them understand the kids needs....?

SS2-B There's a parent anger group, there's a teen group, parents are involved. So there's all kinds of those kinds of things that are happening. Where parents come and they deal with their teens, and they talk about issues, how to better deal with things with their teens, without their teens, teens go alone, whatever. And there are different forums - everywhere. So absolutely, yes to that question. And so they do do that, for sure.

NM So before we leave this part, and - we've got to wrap up pretty quick....What are the disadvantages, what are the challenges, what are the barriers, frustrations?

SS2-B Again, for me. I mean, this'll be real quick - none!

NM Ok, thank you.

SS2-B (laughter) I mean, real quick. Are you going to accept that?

NM Well yeah, absolutely....

SS2-B I mean, I can't sit here and tell you....one whole thing about having this program, I can't. I may be able to sit here and think of some things I'd want to change.

NM Some little picky thing or something? What would you want to change?

SS2-B The (?)....talk about, I mean AS3-B's here....

NM Everybody working for the same organization....is that something you've thought of? Is that a vision you see down the road, that instead of working for....?

SS2-B Like having just....

NM ....all these different government departments and the school....

SS2-B I think there's a benefit, NM, to having different people from different organizations working together. I don't think it would be beneficial to have, for instance, social services take over this, and have a policeman, and....because then social services would then put their particular brand on it. Or probation, or criminal people would put their brand on it. Or school - put their brand on it. You don't want a brand. You want it to be sort of.... homogeneous. You want it to be sort of - we're all working together; that sort of togetherness , huggy-feely kind of thing. I don't think it would be beneficial....

NM That's a good point....

SS2-B However, I don't know why.

NM Just a quick - you maybe answered this, and I'll have it down here, so - if you think you've given me information about this, just say - it's there on the tape. The question is, are the parents and the kids really meaningfully involved, or are they just sort of out there on the periphery where things sort of are done to them, rather than them being involved in the decisions of what gets done to them.

SS2-B Again, my experience from here - and I deal with parents a lot. My experience from here is, I get a parent in the office or in the conference room crying - I can not take this anymore, help me please. They come to us. They come to the program. They come to the Project B interagency process, and they are pretty well set up and they are....we don't take their problems, we don't solve their problems. We help them help themselves. And that's are main focus, because we can't rescue them, because we're not there all the time. You know, and so, and I'm thinking of a particular kid in - it happened at the beginning of the year. Where this mom just said, I can't take it any more. What am I going to do? We finally said to her, we said to her many times that we have this project, and she was one of those one percent - that one person out of ten who says, don't come into my life. At Christmas time, finally it came to a head - in January - after Christmas, she said, I need your help. I can't do it alone. I need your help. So we put her in touch with Project B. Project B (?) and AS2-B gives them skills, in-home workers, family support workers, some parent/teaching kind of stuff. So, I can't speak for how parents would feel, but from looking on the outside looking in, I don't think that that's the case. Maybe for some?

NM No, that's good - you have to speak from your experience. From your perspective, what were you expecting from this project, and did it happen? Like earlier you said you didn't know....

SS2-B ....I had no idea....

NM ....this big high falutin....

SS2-B ....exactly, big (?). I had no idea. It was a pleasant surprise, for SS3-B and I and (?) what it was....this is what this is?! Perfect man, where was this when we needed it last year! So, I was expecting anything. I didn't know what to expect.

NM You were probably wondering, how did we get along without this before eh?

SS2-B Now, I'm happy....I just love it.

NM What would you say to somebody else, like say some other teachers in the school - what advice would you give them if they came to you and said, help me get involved with this Project B?

SS2-B First thing you do is - you go attend their weekly meeting, their weekly meeting every Tuesday.

NM So anybody is invited to go and sit down?

SS2-B Oh, sure, sure. First thing I would do is then I would say, if you want to be involved, speak to SS5-B and say can you get me involved in this. And SS5-B will just look at you and say (after she gets up off the floor!), she'd say, what do you need. And - I want to be more involved, I want to be more active, I want to know more about it, I want to be more involved in the decision making. And one of the things SS5-B does is, she wants to involve all her staff in decision making - whether they choose to be involved in the decision making is another story.

NM She wants to provide the opportunity?

SS2-B But there is an opportunity there for any time....

NM Why would she be falling on the floor if somebody came and asked that, 'cause there's not a lot of that?

SS2-B Well, she would be very grateful, because this is a lot of work and a lot of effort on her part, and it would be like - okay, you can take over a bit of my load, that'd be lovely. That's one, not that she would be surprised that they would be coming to her, or surprised that they would want to be involved in the program. I think some people still have that sort of high cloud sort of, I'm guessing. But me, you know, I know exactly what it is. I know these people....

NM Ok, just about finished here then. Your role in the project then - you've kind of covered it as bd teacher, part time counselor, filling in for SS1-B....

SS2-B Yes, my role is - we've got a few days left of school. So my role very limited this year. SS1-B, as the (position), would be expected to be there. I'm expected to be there, but there aren't many more "there's" to be there. Do you know what I mean?

NM Yeah.

SS2-B However, next year there are many more "theres" to be there, and I will (well SS1-B is gone till Spring Break next year), I will be more active in that. Which means going to some meetings, and being more involved.

NM Oh, so good....and it sounds like you feel pretty positive about that involvement?

SS2-B It's a great program!

NM Have I asked you this, what do think is not so good about the project?

SS2-B They're not here long enough.

NM Ok. And would you say that's the single worst thing? If you had to pick one....

SS2-B ....there's not enough people here. People are working very hard. There's not enough - if there were two AS2-B's, two AS3-B's, two EI's. two S's, two LZ's, ...

NM ....and yet there were none of them here a few years ago, and most schools don't have any of these....

SS2-B ....SJT next door doesn't have it, SA doesn't have it, R doesn't have it. And they're all in the same community. (?) But basically they don't have it - they don't have the resources.... But we need 'em. One more would be nice.

NM What's great about the project (you've kind of told me that, but just sum it up in one phrase or so), and what's the single greatest thing about it?

SS2-B Alright, I like the - again, the accessibility and the return right away. And the best thing I can say about the program is, is that there are dedicated, wonderful group of people working together for the best interest and benefit - without reservation, without constraint - for kids.

NM Their hearts in the right place eh?

SS2-B Period! Nobody's there for the greater glory of life. They are there because kids are in need.

NM No egos getting in the way, eh?

SS2-B Not that I know of.

NM No turf wars?

SS2-B Not that I know.

NM No empire building?

SS2-B No.

NM Just for the kids.

SS2-B And if I knew it, I would tell you, but I don't, and I have nothing about any of that.

NM That's good. Well that's pretty well it for my questions. Is there anything we haven't touched on that you want to add. We've covered a lot of ground. You've given me some great stuff.

SS2-B Well, you asked, and I answered. I've no shortage of talking.

NM This is good and rich data here. I usually ask everybody if there is anything that has happened to them recently that may have influenced their responses?

SS2-B No. Like in life....

NM Well, yeah. Not that you have to tell me what it is, but sometime somebody might have just been through a - had a real lot of negative stuff....

SS2-B ....well, my mother is in intensive care right now. Could you tell that?

NM No.

SS2-B My mother is....she's fine. She's going to be okay. And if you want the other aspect of it - so how do I really feel about that program. You think about that. I mean, I got some good news last night, she's feeling better and all that kind of stuff. But, basically there's been a lot of stress in the last couple of days, so there you go. So - what do I say about the program, I'm not kidding, I mean I don't know what you're going to do about that last statement, about multi-....but you know what I mean, I just can't tell you....If you had asked me yesterday, the day before yesterday, or three weeks from now, or next year, guess what you're going to get? You'll get the same answer. Ask me tomorrow, ask me three weeks from now - when you play the tape. It'll be the same thing. Guaranteed. I'm very happy with the program. Personally, professionally from a program, and from the aspect of the school. Absolutely unbelievable.

NM That sounds good. It sounds like you're a....like, I believe people who feel they're able to do their work, they feel comfortable, and all those things....

SS2-B ....makes me a better teacher, and that's absolutely guaranteed....

NM ....it really helps....

SS2-B Guaranteed, You asked me to talk to SS3-B yesterday, and the question I asked him, and what did he say?

NM Yeah, sliced bread.

SS2-B You saw his reaction.

NM This thing's still going. I'm going to shut this off now.

Appendix 3 - Sample of Coded Comments (Benefits)

Student Benefits

Attitudes

Comments by Students (24):

bringing it to their attention was good

someone to tell your problems to. . . . everything is kept secret

if you talk about it in the Project A group . . . it really helps, like, bring racism and violence to our attention so that if we have a discussion about it in class, I know what I'm talking about

it helps with our attitudes

before - you had this attitude - "oh well, she's getting beat up. . . . none of my business. . . . in the group, you realize, if you don't stop it, it just goes on to somebody else, and . . . until you just stop the line of violence [NAT-3]

once your attitude changes, then you'll have a better home life

-makes everybody happier

I went to the Project B, and I felt better afterwards . . . happier and stuff, like free. . . . I wouldn't have to worry about anything now

I felt happier. . . . team gave me confidence

kind of help motivate you

-everyone in that room is someone you can talk to and not worry about it [FAC-1d]

they're just trying to bring up self-esteem . . . marks and attitude adjustments - stuff like that

you can talk to them about anything you want . . . say anything you want . . . . swear at them, or get mad at them over something that's going on at home as much as you want, and they won't get mad at you for it [FAC-2b]

I can talk to him [AS2-B] about anything, absolutely anything . . . and he doesn't spread it around. . . . between me and him [FAC-2b]

they slowly bring up your self-esteem, and you feel better about yourself and once you feel better about yourself everything else seems to just go up

they do things that just make you feel better

it's just everything they do, it just makes everything so good having the support there

kids are feeling better

having the support there, I guess, it just helps

help you build up self-esteem

-people that know what it's about, they just love it

the support we get from them. . . . there's a lot of support for us all the time

a lot of kids, I've noticed, are happier and feel better about themselves

a lot of support

Comments by Parents (13):

-possible for . . . the kids to understand . . . if a kid trips you or kicks you . . . you don't get back

-when the kids know there is a policeman there . . . you've got to think . . . preventive medicine . . . . help with the kids thinking . . . knowing that these people are here

just someone to talk to

so important to my son, that it's being looked after

-for my son . . . seen that kind of service (police) in a different light . . . important for kids

starting to get into this peer thing and maybe they're going to be driven one way and there is some influence of good

impact on . . . learning, attitudes, behaviour [BEN-Studs, Ach]

more sense of self-worth . . . what that means in the bigger picture

his self-esteem [is going up all the time]

-if her marks are slipping, and she goes in and laughs about it or whatever, they say well, this is not acceptable

S3-B comes home and just raves about them [Project B team]

she can go there and get feedback . . . doesn't have to let them know who she's talked to

if a student is having a particularly bad day they can go in there and get a boost and go away feeling better about themselves [FAC-2b]

Comments by School Staff (26):

-we've got some interested professionals working with kids

anger management, control of emotions

an opportunity to share and talk about some of the difficulties in life and get some advice from other kids and from professionals

-phenomenal change in attitude

kids want to be part of the Positive Heroes group

start working on having these kids adopt a different path in life

-if AS2-B has to intervene, it's not as scary, the trust is already there

if they have troubles or questions regarding the law . . . AS3-B is there for them

helped attitudes towards the school. . . . big time, attitudes, feelings of safety

Kids are feeling more comfortable. . . . feeling safer . . . feeling better

they have an ally down there

-they know it's confidential. . . . know they're getting help . . . know it'll be kept in confidence

whatever they're going through, whatever it is . . . abuse or whatever, that there is someone to help them, that they're normal and they aren't bad, and it's not their fault

he's showing more confidence, self-esteem

kids were taught . . . nothing wrong with them . . . they could worry about their classes and work

they do accept people, they seem to accept kids who are different

more positive heroes . . . sort of come out of Project B . . . positive heroes are good . . . nothing wrong with the geeks

they do accept people, they seem to accept kids who are different

they look like they're happier, and if you ask them if things are okay, did you get to talk to someone, they say, oh yeah. And, you know, they have a different look on their face, a relieved look

no student has ever got cranky . . . I haven't heard . . . negative comments. . . . you know how kids say, it sucks big time?. . . . they don't say that. . . . very positive about it

-one of the huge things the interagency team has brought for us is hope

student attitude results were - incredible. . . . the first question was an increase of 42% - kids feeling safe in their school. . . . parent group describes . . . that's because the kids got [me] back from doing all this other agency work

families have hope

our kids and our parents and community . . . are examining themselves and coming up with a list of strengths instead of giving up

attitude surveys . . . gain 42%

they start taking charge . . . owning their school

Comments by Agency Staff (8):

attitudes may be positively affected through increased awareness and opportunities to be involved in groups

raising awareness about violence. . . . and that will hopefully prevent the number of school fights and . . . incidents in the school grounds [BEN - School]

-found out they weren't stupid, and they also found out they were worth caring about

give them that boost, then I won't see them dropping out at sixteen

improved attitude . . . doing computer work over hanging out. . . . shows a better attitude

greater self-esteem

-students have grown in self-esteem, problem solving . . . reflected in fewer problems, better grades, positive outlook, more friendships

instead of kids being preoccupied with problems

Achievement, Learning

Comments by Students (11):

-they have that tutoring group, and that helps you out. . . . my friend L's in it, and she says it's really helping her with her marks

it helps in some subjects

it helps you realize . . . if I want to go on . . . to college . . . have to hand in my work

-aren't worrying about whatever, problems . . . and they get their marks up

my marks went up way more than they did from last term

friends and other kids you know, that has happened to them too . . . it's changed

-marks are . . . lot more stable . . . more up to the point where they should be

two ladies come in every Tuesday . . . do tutoring. . . . it helped a lot

if kids are feeling better, they get better marks

-after talking to them and stuff, my marks went right back up, you know, and I've noticed that a lot of students are like that

because of this their marks are going up

Comments by Parents (14):

-kids that are in tutoring are getting some needs met

-my kids are very average . . . they are using the YMCA . . . getting free tutoring . . . that's fantastic . . . . they thought it was absolutely awesome

saves lots of out of school time. . . . benefiting their education

this YMCA program . . . if you do go and get tutored . . . they can help improve your marks

if you're being counseled and you are going to take to it, you're bound to get better results in your class work

it gives them more class time and then the children benefit. . . . achieve more . . . learn more because your teacher is there more

youngest son. . . . disturbing the class. . . . good marks, good kid. . . . it's great right now while people handle it

-impact on all . . . learning, attitudes, behaviour [Ben-Studs; Attits, Beh]

the school has a focus on . . . learning, behaviour [Ben-Studs, Beh]

he's able to cope with the work, the level he's at, he's making progress, his marks are going up all the time . . . there's been a big turnaround

-they don't have to miss a lot of school to attend their appointments . . . they're not losing out on their schooling . . . trying to sort things out

the workshops. . . . in social studies they do reports . . . these workshops would help them. . . . another source of information for the kids

my kids use it (information sessions) a lot

able to handle . . . problems . . . better . . . settling down in their classes

Comments by School Staff (20):

-increase in academic standing

peer tutoring

with BD, Adaptation, Opportunity, very definitely (gains in learning)

peripheral gains for every student . . . whether they are dependent handicapped or . . . IQ of 135

-time on task was increased. . . . could focus on teaching and learning

our achievement scores are up. . . . Project B has something to do with it

if kids are scared or frightened or whatever, they are not going to be able to learn. . . . this project enables. . . . issues being addressed in the home and in the school

-when you feel safe and you feel comfortable, of course you're going to achieve better they don't have to take . . . afternoon off school to go visit . . . probation officer

math - they're up . . . social studies - they're up. . . . science - they're way up

from 1991 to 1995 . . . I can guarantee you there's a big increase [in student marks]

-these things are taken off their shoulders . . . they do better academically

we went up a little more because kids were taught . . . nothing wrong with them and they could worry about their classes and work

marks have gone up. . . . testing results

-In one year, the student results . . . were up in all four core subject areas. Two . . . had doubled. Two . . . had increased rather substantially.

it's helped deal with the baggage that stops them from being successful academically

paid off in terms of the one year, dramatic change in achievement results

LA . . . doubled. . . . expect it's going gain about . . . 5%. Science doubled . . . needs to double again. . . . Social Studies . . . expecting it to make about a 10% gain. . . . math . . . near doubled . . . expecting it to near double again

Those kids are going ahead faster - the way that they're engaging in work is more sophisticated. Kids making more independent decisions, work quality is up - the expectations for work quality is higher

P1-B says that his life has changed. . . . academically. . . . he's getting better marks . . . like this giant snowball rolling down hill now gathering up all this positive stuff

Comments by Agency Staff (14):

-the marks, I think would go up

the tutoring program. . . . some real success for some kids

-computer assisted learning . . . upgrade . . . reading, writing and math skills

using the computers . . . improving . . . math (working) with some volunteers that are good people . . . that's making a difference

got lots of individual attention. . . . worked really well on the computers

found out they weren't stupid

hoping that shot in the arm for 8 weeks lasts a lot longer

greater self-esteem . . . lead to improved academic achievement? Yeah

the tutoring program has helped several kids

-student growth with school marks have increased. . . . I think they've even doubled in one or two subjects instead of kids being preoccupied with problems. . . . kids can come to school and concentrate on their school work. . . . that's why you see the . . . marks going up

that's why you see the . . . marks going up [less problems with the teacher]

-important social learning

how time is spent in the classroom

Relationships, Strategies, Behaviour, Participation, Responsibility, Attendance, Citizenship

Relationships (20)

I'm really good friends with AS3-B and JD [S] [FAC - 1d]

there is more friendliness. . . . before everybody used to be fighting and swearing at each other. . . . now they are happier [S]

you don't have to be tough. . . . just be yourself [S] [FAC - 2b]

grade nines are generally not supposed to associate with people in the other grades, and I do, like everyone else does. . . . it's not a big thing anymore [S]

with AS2-B you can make really good bets [S]

make it possible for you to be friends with them [S] [FAC - 1d]

learning . . . not hard to be sociable . . . because some of these kids are really, really shy . . . teaching them it's not hard to approach a group and start talking to them. . . . so we're getting them involved [S]

like friends supporting friends. . . . it's more than ever . . . because we've opened our eyes [S]

has made a lot of friends through Project B [S]

she and AS2-B were best of friends . . . she has more adult friends [P]

was a loner. . . . that's turning around . . . got some friends, different kids [P]

companionship . . . some just want companionship [P]

made friends with the Project B people right away . . . referred quite a few kids [P]

not always work, it's socializing too . . . take their music, and just hang out [SS]

establish better relationships with each other and with the adults around [SS]

relating better to other kids, kids they don't know [SS]

hard to beat too. . . . when the male role models. . . . make an effect [AS]

one boy. . . doesn't have a lot of friends . . . drops by to say hello [AS]

less problems with the teacher [AS]

important social learning [AS] [BEN - Students, Achievement]

Strategies (19)

help you so that you'll make choices that are good for you [S]

there's a lot of people that . . . I've taken . . . into Project B . . . talked to them . . . dealt with my own problems [S]

you can leave them [problems] at the front door . . . pick them up when you leave [S]

able to handle . . . problems . . . better . . . settling down in their classes [P]

able to problem-solve on her own now [P]

she owned up to it, and chose her own consequences and followed through on them [P]

making more independent decisions, work quality is up [SS]

better decisions about managing behaviour . . . at home . . . more responsible [SS]

given them the ability to take charge of their own recovery [SS]

the willingness . . . to accept greater responsibility for their own actions [SS]

follow through more appropriately with friends [SS]

when those students are getting the treatment they need . . . it has an impact on what goes on in the classroom and the other students [SS]

helping kids get better at using strategies for their behaviour [SS]

a social skills training group. . . . a support group . . . for emotional issues [SS]

we notice the difference in how people are dealing with their problems [SS]

Gives them some tools to help themselves [SS]

dropouts . . . teen pregnancies . . . alcohol issues . . . helping kids -give them skills . . . so that down the road they're not getting into the same trouble [AS]

get the kids to develop the skills so that they'll be more effective down the road, to prevent some of the problems that they'll get into [AS]

some skill building and that kind of stuff [AS]

Behaviour (12)

behaviour changes with their attitudes [S]

behaviours have changed . . . can talk to anybody . . . don't have to be a really popular person [S]

it has to help in behaviour [P]

I think there'd be a lot less angry people [P]

impact on all . . . learning, attitudes, behaviour [P] [BEN - Students, School] the school has a focus on . . . responsibility for learning, behaviour [P] [BEN - Students, Achievement]

kids are demonstrating positive behaviours [SS]

had a lot of compliments on how well the students behaved [SS]

positive heroes . . . sort of come out of Project B . . . positive heroes are good [SS]

if you're . . . safe . . . comfortable . . . going to sit in your class. . . . not going to misbehave [SS]

the behaviour in the class, the marks, I think would go up [AS] [BEN - Students, Achievement]

much better student behaviour. . . . less problems with the teacher [AS]

Participation (12)

participate more in school activities? I think so . . . like in grade 7 and 8 . . . I just sat around [S]

more involved in the school [S]

they've got all these things you can do. . . . things that help make you feel involved [S]

session each month . . . guest speakers . . . videos. . . . really neat . . . everybody enjoys it [S]

actually there's been a good turnout. . . . we're doing a good job [S]

first term . . . 60 to 75 kids with their needs being at least addressed [P]

my kids use it [information sessions] a lot . . . every Thursday . . . enjoy themselves [P]

an opportunity to participate in . . . things . . . they didn't have . . . before [SS]

the kids are participating [SS]

through Project B . . . programs coming . . . basketball courts . . . kids are excited [SS]

kept the school basically open through the summer [SS]

it's created some opportunities for kids [SS]

Responsibility (10)

what to do if you have eating disorders [S]

drug problems - they just slowly try to get you off them [S] [FAC - 2b]

if . . . irresponsible, and is sort of referred there, then I think they'll help them [P]

more positive [responsibility]. . . . more a sense that he's in control [P] the school has a focus on that [responsibility for learning, behaviour] [P] [BEN - Students]

a lot of the kids feel quite responsible for their school and for each other [SS]

Project B. . . . a lot to do with improving. . . . responsibility [SS]

work quality is up [SS]

effort's gone up too [SS]

the majority of kids are repeat program participants [recreation, tutoring] [AS]

Attendance (6)

attendance, coming to school, being on time? I don't think so [S]

it might help improve attendance [P]

attendance or punctuality . . . meeting the class on time, with homework [P]

I don't know if it's just a blip in the pattern or why it is, but we have some kids that are just chronic non-attenders [SS]

it's helped attendance [SS]

kids are more attentive, kids are there. . . . you're attending, you're eating, you're safe, you're comfortable. . . . not tangible [SS]

Citizenship (5)

helps a lot . . . if you're a good citizen, good things will come to you . . . Project A helps [S]

to help childrens' hospitals. . . . we just do a lot of things for our community [S]

they need fund raisers. . . . always a lot of kids that will help . . . like the program [P]

good one on one with the students. . . . done a lot of work for Project B [P]

we have the positive heroes group that the kids emulate [SS]

Access to Services, Positive Changes Observed, Reduced Problems, Safer Environment, Family Problems Addressed

Access to Services (29)

they're just there to talk to about anything possible [S] [NAT - 1]

being right here, when it happens you're here [S]

Project B is always there for you if you need somebody to talk to [S]

there's a lot of people I've taken in to Project B [S] most of the students see it . . . they're here to help me [S] [NAT - 1]

if they've got problems they can go and talk to Project B [S]

whatever you need, they provide it [S]

the accessibility for the kids to get in . . . if they need help, it's right there [P]

it opens the door. . . . if the kids have a problem and they can't talk to their parents, they need to go somewhere and talk to somebody [P]

the kids that are in that group . . . are being looked at [P]

on a one-to-one basis . . . you'd be paying $20 an hour for this [P]

crises . . . he's right there to deal with them [P]

when it happens you're here [P]

help them find out where they need to go [P]

they don't have to miss a lot of school to attend their appointments [P]

they're getting better access [SS]

tremendous service. . . . have access to people who know us . . . respond quickly . . . are interested . . . know the kids . . . families [SS]

kids are benefiting, be being in a group in school time [SS]

getting into [hospital], they are getting into CASA treatment program. . . . Child welfare is going into the home . . . bringing in support [SS]

child welfare worker is acting in the best interest of the children [SS]

we are more readily getting treatment for kids that are seriously ill [SS]

they're right here in the building [SS]

I can have that investigated immediately. . . . taken care of effectively . . . immediately [SS]

don't have to take the afternoon off to go visit . . . probation officer [SS]

in the last week, three kids have been helped by Project B . . . whew [SS]

help me [AS2-B]. . . . he did - that day . . . [helped] that kid that day [SS]

the space in that room, is accessible for kids. . . . they can develop a sense of comfort with adults that are in helping roles [AS]

accessibility and coordination and concern about what the needs are [AS]

accessibility to almost any need that they would have . . . if it's not there, someone would find it for them [AS]

Positive Changes Observed (23)

It's changed the school and the students a lot [S] who knows how many kids are not being harassed because these things are being addressed [P]

if you can get help for a kid, and the kid changes as my son has this year, that's like - WOW. . . . we were looking at going into the judicial system with my kid, I mean there's no doubt about it. . . . was just on that path, because of past experiences. . . . got a wonderful kid on our hands now. . . . sure as hell like to have that than what we had before [P]

it's a benefit of course . . . early intervention - the sooner the better [P]

she's matured a lot in the last year and a half. . . . wants to be a social worker now [P]

we have a strong group of kids now at the school [SS]

a fairly large group of kids every month, that deserve recognition [SS]

a change . . . they are aspiring to do other things . . . more for themselves [SS]

benefits to the kids are very real and I think quite tangible [SS]

I could tell you feeling wise . . . sort of atmospheric ally that that's happening [SS]

seeing them shed some of that defeatist attitude [SS]

this on kid . . . was having trouble . . . done a lot better since Christmas [SS]

MC went into 9-3, and P1-B says that his life has changed [SS]

that's an incredible way of saying we've made a difference [SS]

paid off in terms of the one year, dramatic change in achievement results [SS] [BEN-Studs]

this change is taking that potential and turning it forward [SS]

kids there that I'm still hearing good things about from their teachers [AS]

they'll bypass that negative loop down the road [AS]

an 8 week program as opposed to an 8 year program as an adult [AS]

he was a really neat kid in class and - a marked change [AS]

I've seen a lot of benefits, a lot of successes with children [AS]

getting to them early enough to prevent some of that from happening [AS]

the majority of my kids here are repeat program participants [AS]

Reduced Problems (19)

it keeps the fighting down in the school [S]

stops the line of violence [S]

there is less fighting and swearing at one another and stuff [S]

there's a lot less fights . . . a lot less students in the office . . . a lot less violence and yelling all the time. . . . wanting to beat somebody up [S] a lot less violence. . . . all because of a little office in our school. I mean, that says it all, that's all there is to it [S]

a lot less angry people [P]

10 kids just sitting . . . yakking at them . . . better than having a cigarette outside [P]

14 months I've been here we've had one altercation [SS] [BEN, Students, Behaviour]

things happening with the anti-violence program [SS] [NAT - 3]

I don't see much violence here [SS]

one [noon session] was on family violence [SS] [NAT - 2]

stops some kids from pregnancy and STDs and being active in drugs and alcohol, and garbage that keeps them from being successful kids [SS]

back to simple things . . . hared to teach a kid that's worried . . . going to be fed . . . get the hell beat out of him when he gets home, or is there going to be someone at home [SS]

we used to have the schools [fighting] [SS]

raising awareness about violence. . . . and that will hopefully prevent the number of school fights, and. . . . incidents in the school grounds [AS]

give them that boost, then I won't see them dropping out at 16. . . . involved in addictions and the street life [AS]

fewer problems [AS]

instead of kids being preoccupied with problems [AS]

the number of assaults, threats, vandalism, thefts, has decreased - as well as in the whole community [AS]

Safer Environment (16)

kids are safer [S]

it's calmer . . . we feel safer [S]

people are a lot calmer, things have toned down quite a bit. . . . don't get into as many fights. . . . not as many problems. It's just altogether better [S]

less stressful, if anything, you know, and the kids are certainly aware [P]

more safe, there's a more secure feeling rather than a fighting feeling [P]

I think probably that there was less crime [P]

instead of pounding somebody's face . . . or whatever, they can . . . stay there until they've calmed down enough to go back to class [P]

we have safer kids [SS]

those things were not being addressed because people just didn't know [SS] kids have to be safer than they were before [SS]

a safer school than it was at one time [SS]

Kids are feeling safer, feeling better, more time on task [SS]

there's more peace [SS]

Kids feel safer in their community [SS]

the second or third day the child welfare worker and L were trying to find her a place to live, trying to make sure she was safe [SS]

When they're in school now, we offer a safe environment [AS]

Family Problems Addressed (14)

you'll have a better home life [S]

helped a lot of the students a lot. . . . with problems at home [S]

like a kid getting beat up by their parents. . . . they put it to a stop then. . . . don't wait and make you do all this other stuff. . . . they get right to it. . . . Or parents drinking . . . they help you deal with it. . . . work you through it [S] [FAC - 2b]

aren't getting hurt as much by parents [S]

I didn't know what my Mom would do. . . . I said get me out of there. . . . he [did], immediately [S] [FAC - 2b]

they took me out of a place where I was not safe [S]

made a lot of families better [S]

I talked to the police officer . . . told him this was going on . . . talked to the psychiatrist . . . everything is okay now [S] [FAC - 2b]

if you're being. . . . abused at home or whatever - it's hard. . . . they help them understand that it's okay. Like it's okay to tell, and it's okay to feel sorry, it's okay to be sorry, but it's not okay to be sorry if it's not your fault. Like it's not okay to feel it's your fault [S] [BEN - Students, Attitudes]

in the best interest of the child she was pulled [P]

divorces, breakups . . . children still take it hard . . . they've been counseled there [P]

issues being addressed in the homes and in the school that are enabling [SS]

making better decisions at home [SS]

decisions in terms of . . . the parents role . . . what needs to be broadened at home [AS]

Parent Benefits

Knowledge and Skills (25)

He said, well c'mon, you have to do this yourself. . . . she did it all by herself . . . she felt really good about it. . . . it does benefit the parents a lot too [S]

help them do it the right way. . . . they're not doing it for them, but they're helping [S]

even though I found out that he wasn't really attention deficit [P]

gave me books to read, which I did [P]

not been in trouble for a month now . . . month [since] we've put him on it [P]

we weren't too sure where to send anybody. . . . as well as the people who are in crisis so. . . . it's been good [P]

really helpful people to anybody. . . . we've directed. . . . AS3-B was really helpful [P]

the greatest thing is to finally have a place to go to for the information [P] [Nat - 3]

they deep the parents informed [P]

you can phone and say . . . my concerns, what can I do . . . where can I go. . . . They provide information to the parents [P] [Nat - 3]

parents come and they deal with their teens, and they talk about issues, how to better deal with things with their teens [P]

took time to do handwritten papers for me [P]

gives them skills, in-home worker . . . support workers . . . parent teaching [SS]

group of parents who come in for parenting skills [SS]

some parents are getting training on how to be good parents [SS]

there's a parent anger group, there's a teen group [SS]

opened up a whole spectrum of help for the parents [SS]

they can get themselves out of welfare . . . muck and despair [SS]

aboriginal group . . . access to a place where there's sewing machines. . . . we're going to juggle our home ec classes and have them come into the school [SS]

give them the ability to take charge of their own recovery [SS] [BEN - Students, Attitudes

better understanding of their kids, kids needs, how to deal with them [AS]

more aware of what their children are going through [AS]

case conferences dealing with specific children [AS]

It's there for the parents to learn [AS] connection with . . . academics and decisions in terms of how time is spent in the classroom . . . at home on school work . . . parents role in relation to school issues, what school issue need to be at school from the students point of view, what needs to be broadened to home [AS]

Access to Services (21)

whenever they have spare time . . . they're in there talking [S]

a lot of parents just drop in to see how things are going [S]

I did go through the CASA, they sent one of their workers here and I was there in a week and a half, and I had waited 3 years [P] [Nat - 3]

you worry for 3 years . . . my kid is driving everybody crazy. . . . it takes forever on your own, to get anywhere. . . . SS5-B one day . . . said, use Project B and I did, and like a week and a half later we were in [P] [Nat - 3]

don't have to search for these things [P] [Nat - 3]

it was some place for these people to start. . . . been banging their heads against the wall . . . at least they were able to have the access here [P]

definitely direct them to somebody here [P]

an easy number to phone to get information [P]

I was beating my head against the wall . . . if all else fails . . . somebody there could get us on the right track [P]

If you're having trouble with your teen . . . is there anything I can - parenting groups or whatever . . . they can give you contact people [P]

you can phone - say . . . my concern. . . . they provide information to parents [P]

these people right here right now, willing to help . . . able to help [SS]

access to people who know us [SS]

we're moving more and more to becoming a community centre [SS

they [parents] need that and we didn't have that before [SS]

access to team members [SS]

parents who have come in for help, it has been beneficial [SS]

they [parents] have better access [AS]

a place to call and people to access . . . if things aren't going well . . . they could come back to that place to try to problem solve in a different way [AS]

making sure those resources are there for families [AS] [Nat - 32

if somehow it's not working. . . . it's often then that Project B. . . . [AS]

Attitudes (17)

most parents they do agree to it and they're happy it's here. I've talked to a few people, and they're glad that it's here [S]

a lot of parents that are happier with their students and happier with their school because the school isn't always on their back. . . . their kid's staying out of trouble, and they're a lot happier at home [S]

it makes them open their eyes [S]

jobs done, don't have to worry about it [P]

to me it was wonderful [P]

it certainly changed my views, cause like I said, I never thought I would be in there, and now I've used them a couple of times [P]

there's so many advantages [P]

behalf of the Parent Talk group, I'm really fortunate to have the Project B in the school - . . . just so worthwhile, there's no price tag on it, it's invaluable. That's it! [P]

it's helping the school, it's helping the community [P]

the community outreach program . . . community feeling [SS]

given to some families is . . . self-esteem to get back to the world of work [SS]

nine out of ten will say . . . great idea . . . vast majority would say thank you [SS]

significant reduction in that [get out of my face] . . . ownership of parents [SS]

tearing down that frustration level [SS]

we've restored hope to families [SS]

the problem is dealt with, that's got to be a relief to the parents [AS]

parents are more understanding [AS]

Opportunities for Involvement (16)

whenever a student has a problem . . . parents are notified [S]

a lot of parents hang out in there too [S]

where we're trying to go with the group - is parents helping parents [P]

we've directed a lot of people to the Project B [P]

provide opportunities for parents to sit around the table . . . help from one another [P]

consistent group . . . a lot of support from each other [SS]

Parents are involved in the work of the school more [SS]

there's a parental group on Tuesday nights [SS] invite them to come in. . . . show them . . . how to access team members [SS]

we're going to juggle around our home ec classes and have them come in to the school . . . kids see their moms coming in and going. . . . provide some daycare . . . basically the community now is taking this one on. . . . We're just going to provide the hall [SS]

parents are involved [SS]

more parents involved in the . . . school . . . expecting that to keep going [SS]

there's a parent . . . who's interested in doing a parenting group herself [AS]

Parents can get more involved, they're more than welcome to be here [AS]

I'll talk with the parent, I'll complete an assessment, and develop a plan [AS]

can get more involved. . . . Project B has helped that [parent involvement] a bit [AS]

School Benefits

More Time to Teach (30)

spend more time on teaching [S]

a load off the teachers. . . . don't have to deal with all these little petty things anymore. . . . taken a lot off administration, 'cause there's not always kids in here . . . waiting to get in trouble. And conduct forms [S]

the counseling program . . . more involved in the school and the students [S]

I think this must take a real weight off various teachers [P]

takes time off their schedule . . . they're so busy with their teaching [P]

it gives them more class time and then the children benefit [P]

teaching-wise, hours . . . more in the classroom has got to be a big benefit [P]

it helps to ease up. . . . like they still have a responsibility in it, but it probably uses up a lot of the extra phoning time and stuff [P]

other things that they used to deal with . . . now have other people to go to. . . . other people to take care of that . . . focus on . . . teaching [P]

could focus on teaching and learning [SS]

more opportunities to focus on teaching [SS]

If Project B wasn't here, you and I wouldn't be having this meeting [SS]

I'm freed up now to do other things, in my classroom, in the school . . . in the office [SS]

freeing me, it's like a lifting for me, because I don't have to do that [telephone tag, wrestle with kids] anymore [SS]

I can work hard to do other things - hey, like teach!. . . . the kid rather than wrestle with him [SS] [NAT - 3] teachers are working harder . . . smarter; . . . we've got access . . . so we've got more time in the classroom to do what teachers are paid to do [SS]

teachers are teaching more [SS]

we can teach now [SS] [NAT - 3]

we had time as a staff to talk about . . . educational matters. . . . spend more time on teaching [SS]

difference for us . . . in the administrative team is . . . we get to do our work [SS] [NAT - 3]

visit classes . . . 1 on 1s with teachers. . . . Meet with kids about school [SS]

the school then - I as one member agency - then get to do what I do best, and that's work with our kids [SS]

the kids got their principal back, from . . . other agency work [SS] [BEN - Students, Attitudes]

more time for teaching. . . . less of the other baggage that takes away from time on task [SS]

getting the school back to the staff, the students, the parents, the community. . . . to the kids who want to learn, to teachers who want to teach [SS]

introduced her to the child welfare worker . . . came back . . . to do minor things like re-staff and re-timetable . . . had an unexpected 30 kids [SS]

teachers are able to teach more, spend less time on social and emotional problems [AS]

the main benefit for the teachers, is they can rely more on teaching [AS]

the teacher doesn't have to give that much attention to that distraction . . . other kids lose out [AS]

teachers can continue to teach [AS]

Overall School Program Benefits (20)

it changed the school and the students a lot [S] [BEN - Students]

helped a lot through the whole school [S]

it's helping the school, it's helping the community [P]

a few programs that have been initiated that are really highly successful [SS]

confirmation that the Y is committed for another year [SS]

a supervisor 10 hours a week, which is terrific [SS]

a tutoring program for students [SS]

tie in a recreational aspect with their tutoring program [SS] to take advantage of that captive audience to involve kids in some of the programs that are being offered by, or some of the expertise that our interagency people have [SS]

topics that are not always appropriate to deal with in the classroom [SS] [FAC - 2b]

opportunities to engage in activities that result in benefits [SS]

have some energy left and some resources to put into . . . preventing some things [SS] [NAT - 3]

I'm able to be more things to more people [SS]

through Project B we've got these programs [SS]

now the parents come in for education things [SS] [NAT - 3]

we decided to stream our grade nines [SS]

this cool one group that staff wanted to put on an academic emphasis [SS]

opening up to ideas about diet, abuse, and showing more respect for kids and families [AS]

the school has benefited by having all those professionals here [AS]

connection with . . . academics and decisions in terms of how time is spent in the classroom . . . at home on school work [AS]

Access to Services (20)

it's available right there in the school . . . most of them like it [S]

good for them to have a place to go to when they see a kid in trouble, be it, you know - mentally, developmentally, or whatever [P]

it takes some of the responsibility off them to have to contact these agencies and, you know, get them in here and deal with these things [P]

just contact the Project B and say that they have a concern about a student - can you look into it or whatever [P]

opened the door for us [SS]

immediacy of service and . . . proactive kinds of programs we can run, and the fact that time on task improved in school [SS] [NAT - 3]

it facilitates that communication [SS] [FAC - 2b]

we're also better able to identify who needs those services [SS]

have some sense of what services . . . they need and how to access them [SS]

immediately . . . very important for us because we deal with high risk kids [SS]

can have that investigated immediately [SS]

the staff as a whole are now more aware of what services are available, and more conscious about bringing concerns forward [SS]

timeliness of the service [SS]

have access [SS]

timeliness is absolutely wonderful, the accessibility is absolutely. . . . those kind of things, being right here in the school [SS] [NAT - 3]

they're right here in the building [SS] [NAT - 3]

introduced her to the child welfare worker . . . came back . . . to do minor things like, re-staff and re-timetable . . . had an unpredicted 30 kids [SS]

I just walk down the hall and say, AS2-B - [first name], [first name] - AS2-B. I'm outta here. That's exactly it [SS]

access to all the services [AS]

They'll send a referral our way, and we'll deal with it [AS]

Attitudes (17)

the teachers are friendlier [S] [NAT - 3]

they're always happy, they've always got a smile on [S]

they feel a lot better if . . . they're getting help that . . . they can't provide [S]

what is exciting is that we've got people who are committed [SS]

meet with their teachers and talk . . . So that has been a real plus for us [SS]

interagency people . . . going out of their way to try to be involved with teenagers [SS]

you have to acquiesce, you have to compromise [SS]

saying we'll never work in a school without a Project B team [SS]

to have the team support is just phenomenal [SS]

it's been great for me. . . . it's been invaluable for me. . . . therefore I can be relaxed [SS]

was a pleasant surprise. . . . I'm happy. . . . I just love it [SS]

openness, communication, and organized . . . we know that they're there. . . . know that they're getting help [SS]

aware that if someone is suicidal . . . so it's the confidence [SS]

Project B has helped with that [attitudes] [SS]

I don't have to worry about these things [SS]

the difference it's made is incredible. . . . staff attitude results were up [SS]

I think they feel maybe supported - that there's someone else out there [AS]

School Climate (9)

it makes it easier on them [teachers], 'cause. . . . there's less fighting in the classes, and stuff like that. We're much more calmer [S] teachers, I think it calms them down a little bit too, 'cause all these kids who've got problems - usually they're the problem kids in the class [S]

don't have to deal with these petty things anymore [S]

a boost to the school's sort of overall atmosphere [P]

a positive thing for the kids, and for the staff too [P]

there's more peace [SS]

violence is a little more under control [SS] [BEN - Students, Reduced Problems]

staff members have more an opportunity to feel as if they're safe [SS]

pride and support, and there's a sense of being part of the team. . . . that's exciting [AS]

Knowledge and Skills (8)

the teachers, knowing that they can do something with a child [P]

an opportunity to broaden her expertise . . . she can watch the experts [SS]

staff are gaining . . . expertise as well, by being involved in that process [SS]

the contact that the rest of my staff have with the Project A group and with the expertise that these experts have [SS]

walk into my classroom with all of that knowledge . . . the kids we've discussed, the issues . . . I feel I have a real advantage [SS]

it helps in your teaching . . . it helps in your administrative work too [SS]

that's knowing your limitations and saying, well I don't know, this looks like it might be - you better go see LZ [SS]

makes me a better teacher, and that's absolutely guaranteed [SS]

Agency Benefits

Provision of Services (21)

can maybe prevent some crises down the road by being here [P]

she's referred quite a few kids to the program, and brought them in [P]

they feel the results of their work more immediately [P]

If a child is seeing the counselor from F&SS, and it becomes, say a police issue . . . they've permission to speak to the constable [P]

better access to the needs [SS]

they're out in the community where the action is [SS] you contact several people to get the child glasses; and then you see her wearing them everyday [SS]

once you . . . experience the environment . . . allow for more possibilities [AS]

we can really capitalize on, and they can use our strengths, and so that's the piece about sharing resources, rather than just referring back + forth [AS]

where I get excited is . . . joint projects and . . . outside . . . typically do [AS]

a lot more possibilities [AS]

cause we see that . . . all kinds of possibilities [AS]

a lot more possibilities you can do [AS]

it's helped me be out here and hopefully provide tutors out here, rather than relying on all the kids to come downtown [AS]

seeing these people as my co-workers [AS]

easier access to the students, and their families [AS]

I get faster access to their services [AS]

we have the perspective of different disciplines cause we see that . . . all kinds of possibilities [AS]

I have more kids coming to me, giving me information [AS]

always a lot of kids that will help [AS]

benefits for us is, I get to understand other agency mandates better [AS]

Knowledge of Students etc. (11)

worked with AS1-A the most because, they had a teen Expo at one of the smaller malls around here . . . me and AS1-A were at a station together [S]

made friends with the Project B people [P]

they get to know them better [P]

they have a better understanding of schools and the reality of schools [P]

it puts them out in the community [P]

and just know what's happening [P]

I've been able to see kids here - pull them out of math class to do my intake interview kind of thing, and get to know them [AS]

now I know what they're like in school . . . how they're doing in school, and I get more information than just what they report themselves [AS]

sharing perceptions about kids and finding out what else can happen [AS]

a lot of information comes my way, to help me solve problems [AS]

able to get to know and interact with kids on personal level [AS]

Use of Resources (10)

the kids do a lot of posters for them [P]

we can really capitalize on, and they can use our strengths, and so that's the piece about sharing resources, rather than just referring back + forth [AS]

a lot more skill levels [AS]

a lot more that I know about resources at west end that I didn't know [AS]

I have access to textbooks for kids, I have access to records [AS]

I've been able to do that during my work hours. . . . [not] nights [AS]

we sort of share responsibility more for doing things [AS]

some issues in that family that you can deal with that I can't even touch [AS]

or whoever as a co-worker, who can have a little more influence with parents or the students can help you do your work [AS]

sharing expertise and resources [AS]

Attitudes (7)

for them, it's the support they get from us [S]

they feel good because they're helping students . . . making things better [S]

they're just happy about having us here [S]

a place for comfort and . . . support. . . . they feel the same way, I mean if he has a problem you know, all of us are there you know, just to talk. And he'll sit there and tell us . . . and we'll say, well why don't you do this, or . . . that [S]

what is exciting is that we've got people who are committed [SS]

knowing there are other people who are committed to make a difference with teens, and wanting to improve services for teens [AS]

there's a sense of seeing kids change and seeing kids benefiting, and parents recognizing that as well [AS]

Public Awareness (7)

more attention to their particular agency. . . . They are here. . . . perhaps they are used more . . . if they are in one central place [P]

they are here so, public awareness has got to be. . . . .. [P]

your agency . . . would be used more for what it should be used [P]

More known. . . . known to the public [P]

it facilitates that communication [SS]

I've developed a lot of relationships . . . which is irreplaceable [AS]

I'm better known [AS]

General Benefits, Positive Comments

Comments (36):

a very popular program [S]

It's a good team [S]

It's just the things they said [S]

All that I can say is that it's a good program [S]

all I can say is, it's absolutely awesome. It's just - there's social workers, there's our policeman [oh, he's leaving us here - sob]. . . . [S]

I don't know. . . . I love it personally [S]

what is really great about the project? everything! [S]

If I haven't said I love it, then. . . . I love it! [S]

it's something that I really value a lot. Like it's not something. . . . I don't know, it's just something that means a lot to me [S]

people that know what it's about, they just love it [S]

it's a great program, and I don't see . . . like there is a lot of support [S]

it's a good thing that they're here [S]

a no disappointment guarantee [S]

there's more advantage I think than problem [P]

to me it was wonderful [P]

they opened up their doors and said sure . . . that was wonderful, really [P]

I've seen what it's done to up. . . . even if you don't use it . . . it's doing good for others [P]

we have this wonderful service here [P]

It's wonderful, you know [P]

it's the whole picture - everybody benefits. . . . has to benefit from it. [P]

you walk in the door, and it's very positive [P]

we are on a good track [SS]

haven't had any real failures in terms of what we've initiated [SS]

a really good program [SS]

it's not a stranger walking in, and that's been a wonderful difference [SS]

I like it very much. . . . working with those people [SS]

a great program! [SS]

Guaranteed. I'm very happy with the program. Personally, professionally from a program, and from the aspect of the school. Absolutely unbelievable [SS]

sliced bread [SS]

going beyond what's expected [SS]

I hope they stay [SS]

Can't ask for more than that [SS]

Best kept secret [SS]

it's an experience being at School B [SS]

We can deal with them all [AS]

as a partnership we've broken down a lot of walls [AS]